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Footprints of Resilience: Tracking the Career Development Steps of African American Male Musicians

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Footprints of Resilience: Tracking the Career Development Steps of
African American Male Musicians

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Human Resource and Workforce Development Education

by

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ABSTRACT

For African American (AA) male musicians, the road toward career advancement in the entertainment industry is particularly arduous. Despite many difficulties on the journey to career success, the history of gospel, R&B, jazz, and funk music is evidence that many AA male musicians find their way to develop and advance their careers. Many AA male musicians find career development and advancement opportunities through religious and sacred institutions. However, the journey to become a professional musician for AA males is fluid and not formalized causing ambiguity in the steps taken to enter this career field and sustain growth in a rapidly changing music industry. There is an absence of professional training opportunities that focus on enhancing employability skills for musicians which contributes to the lack of support musicians receives to overcome obstacles that barricade career development and advancement in an unstructured workforce.

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that impact career resilience and adaptability during career development and advancement for independent AA male musicians who work in a free agency workforce. The study explored resiliency and adaptability constructs such as survival, initiative, recovery, preparation, and thriving through a conceptual filter that sifts through individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that may influence the growth and advancement of the AA male music careers.

This study was guided by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (VST) as the conceptual framework and Career Construction Theory (CCT) as the theoretical framework to investigate the career development of AA musicians. A pragmatic qualitative research design was used as the strategy of inquiry for this study to intentionally employ specific data collection methods attending to the 15 AA male musician's account of events and experiences that have shaped

career behaviors, his daily work related tasks and interactions with his environment, and his employment transitions or intentional involvement in career building activities. The musicians in the study proposed individual, interpersonal, sociocultural factors, and career self-management behaviors that impact career resilience and adaptability. The findings were discussed within the context of the research questions and implications and recommendations for practice, research, and policy were offered.

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“I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O’Lord, I will make music” (Psalms 101:1 ESV). Throughout my professional and academic journey, God has been my Conductor orchestrating experiences, relationships, and learning opportunities which has allowed me to serve those who have been called to make music. I am grateful and forever indebted to God for being the source of my strength, provision, and support during the doctoral and dissertation process. Although I am not a musician, it has been through God’s will and purpose for my life that I am able to continue my work in support to those He has gifted to thrive in the music business.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the legacy starters in my life.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

According to Price Waterhouse Coopers (2016), the United States has the largest media and entertainment market in the entire world that will generate \$771 billion by 2019, almost \$150 billion more than in 2015. This industry includes the production and distribution of motion pictures, television programs, commercials, audio recordings, radio, games, and publishing. Due to changes in its business structure as a result of rapid advances in technology and the impact of digital media on record sales and distribution, the music sector of the entertainment industry has become an extremely competitive market for independent musicians. Although the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) reported that over 167,000 positions are filled by musicians and singers in the U.S. (and this number will increase at least by 5% in the next eight years), Passman (2012) highlighted that there are countless numbers of independent musicians who are challenged to sustain profitable and promising careers in this industry.

For African American (AA) male musicians, the road toward career advancement in the entertainment industry is particularly arduous. Ferguson (1991) and George (2003) argued that due to race and occupation, the Black music professional is an isolated and insular member of a community of business professionals within the larger music industry. Factors of race and occupation reveal unique challenges for AA male musicians who strive to sustain a profitable and satisfying career in music. Despite many difficulties on the journey to career success, the history of gospel, R&B, jazz, and funk music is evidence that many AA male musicians find their way to develop and advance their careers. However, the journey to become a professional musician for AA males is fluid and not formalized (Ferguson, 1991), causing ambiguity in the steps taken to enter this career field and sustain growth in a rapidly changing music industry.

There is an absence of professional training opportunities that focus on enhancing employability skills for musicians in general (McCarthy, Brooks, Lowell, & Zakaras, 2001), which contributes to the lack of support that this population receives to overcome obstacles that barricade career development and advancement in an unstructured workforce.

Both race and occupation play a major role in the difficulties that AA male musicians may experience in pursuit of a music career. In a Euro-American dominated industry, many musicians face impediments that relate to the dynamics of oppression and racism in the larger society as seen by “the historic exploitation of the African American performer, political and financial difficulties incurred by the independent enterprises, and denial of African American involvement in the executive realms of the major [music industry]” (Ferguson, 1991, p. 27). Yet, there is hope on the journey to career success for an AA male musician. That hope starts in the very venue that has sustained and uplifted the AA culture for centuries – the church!

As music continues to be an integral part of religious services for a number of denominations, churches offer viable employment opportunities for musicians (Beeching, 2005; Feder, 1984; Uscher, 1990). Many AA male musicians find career development and advancement opportunities through religious and sacred institutions, particularly those that reflect the community in which the musician was raised. Recognizing that “church” may provide a gateway to gain experience performing music, this research study focused on the experiences of AA male musicians who are employed by religious institutions but considered independent artists who are not contracted or signed with major record labels.

Problem Statement

Without proper training in, guidance toward, and access to best practices for career development and advancement in music, musicians seeking success in this profession are at risk

for high unemployment rates and instability in the workforce. Based on previous research (Artazcoz, Benach, Borrell, & Cortes, 2004; Bartley, 1994; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999), unemployment has been linked to a host of negative outcomes, such as poverty, poor mental health, stress, and harmful health behaviors (smoking and drinking). The bigger picture of this effect can potentially create an economic issue that perpetuates a long-standing history of poverty and oppression within the AA community. As members of this population strive to become musicians, they may depend on federal assistance and other economic support programs to supplement self-sufficiency.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that impact career resilience and adaptability during career development and advancement for independent AA male musicians who work in a free agency workforce. The study explored elements of resiliency and adaptability through a conceptual filter that sifts through cultural and historical, interpersonal, and individual factors that may influence career growth and advancement for AA male musicians. This study identified career behaviors, career decisions, internal and external skills, external resources, and career self-management strategies used to overcome challenges that AA male musicians believe are crucial to career development and advancement in the music industry.

Research Questions

This research study was guided by the following questions:

- 1) What do independent AA male musicians perceive to be key factors in career development and advancement that impact their music careers?
 - a. What are the individual factors that influence career advancement for AA male musicians?

- b. How do these individual factors impact career advancement?
 - c. Which interpersonal factors influence how AA male musicians interact and socialize with his/her environment to shape their career behaviors?
 - d. How do these interpersonal factors impact career development?
 - e. What are the sociocultural factors that play a role in career advancement for AA male musicians?
 - f. How do these sociocultural factors play a role in career advancement?
- 2) How do independent AA male musicians persist through challenges that may affect career development and advancement?
- a. What are the major challenges that affect career development and advancement?
 - b. How do challenges affect career development and advancement for AA male musicians?
 - c. Which tactics related to survival and recovery has helped AA male musicians to thrive in the music industry?
 - d. What strategies are used to prepare for changes that may occur on the job?

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Although there have not been many previous studies that solely attend to AA males in a free agency workforce or the career development behaviors of musicians, studies exist that highlight crucial aspects of career development for musicians and may apply to AA males (Ferguson, 1991; Kirschbaum, 2007; Manturzevska, 1990; Morris, 2013). Data from these previous studies point toward the importance of considering sociocultural factors that may influence the career development process of musicians. For example, Manturzevska (1990)

indicated that professional development of musicians is shaped by the musician's economic and social environment, his or her interaction with family and mentoring relationships, and intrinsic motivation coupled with the ability to acculturate and adjust to changes. Kirschbaum (2007) and Johnsson and Hager (2008) reiterated the importance of considering the impact of sociocultural factors when the researchers emphasized the influence of mentorships and networks that are imperative to professional growth for musicians. Based on these previous studies, this research investigated the career development steps of AA musicians in the music industry using Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (VST) as the conceptual framework and Career Construction Theory (CCT) as the theoretical framework for this study.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (VST) is a theory that is rooted within a constructivist paradigm which asserts that realities are formed through multiple and intangible constructions of individuals and may vary for each person or group holding the construction (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Constructivists believe these constructs are byproducts of experiences that individuals learn from or interact within presented situations (Schunk, 2008). Within the logic of VST, development and learning are viewed as "existing in the flux of individuals relating to their world, driven by relational processes and their unfolding logic, and therefore as not being constrained by rigidly imposed, pre-programmed scripts or rules" (Stetsenko, 2008, p. 477). Simply put, constructivism is a perspective used in observation and scientific research that posits that people build an understanding of the world around them based on experiences and reflections of those experiences. VST provides conceptual boundaries as to what components should be considered when seeking to understand how AA male musicians perceive reality based on the meanings conceived during interaction and reflection.

VST is a useful theory to explain human development that occurs in a web of thinking, learning, and interacting within the given environment. The theory takes into consideration three factorial categories: individual factors, environmental factors (related to culture and history), and interpersonal factors. Considering these factors, VST helps to: a) identify unique characteristics of individuals and how these characteristics influence development; b) expose the dynamic nature of an individual's immediate environment; and c) articulate the importance of understanding the relationship between the individual and his or her environment to determine stages of human development. VST holds relevance when looking at elements of the AA male musician's experience that may affect how these musicians make career mobility decisions and the accessibility to resources that will add value to their pursuit toward career development.

Individual factors are inherited characteristics that produce unique learning and behavioral trajectories compared to others facing similar situations (Schunk, 2008). Examples of individual factors would be those related to psychological and physiological elements such as personality, attitude, beliefs, self-image, motivation, creative talent, or ability. These factors are unique and innately tied to the individual and cannot be replicated by anyone else. For the purposes of this study, it was the researcher's goal to allow the participants to highlight individual factors that identified unique characteristics that influenced career development and advancement.

Environmental factors associated with VST are related to cultural and historical experiences and events that mold the individual's understanding of how the world works around them. The cultural-historical tenet of this theory suggests that development cannot be dissociated from the context in which it occurs (Schunk, 2008); thus, it is important to discover from a cultural and historical standpoint the world in which an individual interacts and transforms his or

her thinking and behavior. It was this researcher's aim to identify if and how race, gender, culture, and religion have played a role in career advancement of AA male musicians.

The last tenet of VST is interpersonal influences. Interpersonal factors are those that influence how an individual interacts and socializes within his or her environment. Vygotsky believed that social activity helps to stimulate developmental processes and fosters a sense of cognitive growth toward the learning or behavioral activity (Schunk, 2008). Rather than assume specific interpersonal factors, the researcher inquired about the interactions with persons in their environment that AA male musicians feel are imperative to growth and career development.

As the researcher of this study navigated through the perspectives of AA male musicians and their thoughts about career development and advancement using VST as its conceptual framework, it is important to consider an underpinning theory that is relevant to the phenomenon being studied (Sinclair, 2009). This theoretical framework guided the researcher in understanding how to travel through desired knowledge outcomes. In this study, Career Construction Theory (CCT) was the base of knowledge to: a) guide the construction of interview questions; b) consider definitive principles related to developing and advancing a musician's career; and c) evaluate the perspective of meaning in the dynamics of one's web of relationships that impact career development.

In career counseling, career development theories serve as the foundation for career interventions and help to predict outcomes or explain phenomenon related to career choice and development (Harris-Bowlsbey, 2014). Unfortunately, "much of career theory to date has been applicable to limited cultural, gender, and socioeconomic populations...and the generalization of these theories to other population groups has been a major concern expressed in the career literature" (Watson, 2013, p. 3). Global cultural diversity has deemed it necessary for

practitioners in career counseling to explore how to relate culture and context to career constructs so that career counselors, theorists, and researchers are able to respond to the needs of the modern-day mobile worker who encounters hardships and opportunities related to changes in the labor force, restructuring of occupations, and multicultural imperatives (Savickas, n.d.). Watson (2013) discussed the impact of different environments on career oppression in which the realities of macrosystemic factors (such as culture, society, and historical contexts) constrain individual career development. Thus, it was appropriate to consider CCT as a theoretical backing to inquiry about how AA male musicians have constructed their careers due to the nature of CCT and its consideration to three systems of influence in career development: the individual system (intrapersonal variables), the social system (interpersonal variables), and the environmental-societal system (culture, historical, and socioeconomic variables) (Watson, 2013).

Glavin and Berger (2012) explained that CCT takes Holland's (1997) theory of vocational choice and personality types further and advances Super's (1990) theory of vocational development to address the why, what, and how of individuals' career decisions with respect to their vocational personality (what they like to do), career adaptability (how they get to do it), and life themes (why they do what they do). CCT acknowledges the importance of developmental, motivational, and contextual issues that are involved in the process of choosing and advancing in one's career as the theory recognizes that "work" is only one of many aspects within human life structure where people enact social roles (Hartung & Taber, 2008). Since this is the case, CCT suggests that it is important to attend to two things: a) how variables such as age, sex, gender, and social class may affect investment and involvement in social roles; and b) how the relative roles in family, play, community, school, work, and other domains of experience that individuals are involved in shape their development. Glavin and Berger (2012) contended this concept by

postulating that CCT suggests people choose work based on personal meaning and also what matters to society. The caveat to CCT is its flexibility in its tenets to consider an environment where the world of work may be absent and the meaning of work as a life role may be limited to the basic need for survival (Watson, 2013).

Savickas (2002) offered that "career construction theory adheres to the epistemological constructivism that says [people] construct representations of reality" (p. 154) and viewing careers from a constructivist and contextual standpoint allows researchers and practitioners to recognize the processes that construct and develop an individual's career throughout his or her course of life using person-centered methods. In methodology relevant to practice, CCT extracts recurring phrases, thoughts, and words that can be organized into themes that speak to a person's interests, personality traits, self-concepts, and interactions in his or her environment. Hartung and Taber (2008) summarized four keystones of CCT that provided this study with guidance in what elements to attend to during the data analysis process:

- life structure (shaped by the constellation of work and other social roles that an individual adheres to in their world);
- strategies (coping mechanisms for dealing with developmental tasks, transitions, and change);
- stories or narratives that indicate motivational patterns and themes that define life; and
- style (which are the individual characteristics or traits such as abilities, interests, and personal that form a self-concept).

Attending to these dimensions during the study yielded rich data that highlighted specific challenges and opportunities of work experiences directly related to the individual's truth and

perspective of interactions that comprise their working life. To understand how AA male musicians in this study make career decisions that affect development and advancement, it was helpful to approach inquiry using these keystones of CCT.

A final consideration of CCT relevant to the study of career development and advancement for AA male musician is that CCT illuminates the importance of becoming adaptable to macro contextual career influences so that individuals are prepared for possibilities that may arise on their career journey (Watson, 2013). Hence, the concept of career adaptability is a notable factor of the theory that suggests that over time, one should develop strategies of growth and change in one's vocational behavior to adjust and make room for triumphs, traumas, and travel along the road to career advancement. According to Hartung and Taber (2008), these adaptability strategies are constructed with consideration to attitudes, beliefs, and competencies of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012). The concept of adaptability was a point of focus when inquiring about individual factors and experiences that have allowed musicians to navigate through career situations and ultimately achieve advancement through career decision making and applicable strategies used to reach success.

Using Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as a conceptual framework justifies the researcher's use of qualitative methods to attain knowledge of unique perspectives as it relates to cultural-historical, interpersonal, and individual factors that provide context for AA male musicians' career development and advancement. Utilizing career construction theory as a theoretical framework takes into consideration these factors to build meaning as to how and why the relationship between personal, historical, and cultural realities play a major role in developing and advancing as an AA male professional in the music industry. Both frameworks complement each other in that the theoretical framework positioned the study to make sense of

the data collected with regard to how and why AA males build their careers the way they do while the conceptual framework provided context as to what concepts are necessary to build constructs to support the theoretical framework.

Population Description

In this study, the researcher interviewed 15 professional AA male musicians who were consistently paid to perform music through a religious institution located in a metropolitan area in a Southern state. Patton (2002) affirmed that there are no rules for determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies; however, the goal was to attain a level of saturation in the data when there is no new information that comes out of adding more participants to the study. Interviewing 15 musicians allowed this researcher to determine if there was an array of unique perspectives or commonalities amongst musicians as it relates to career development and advancement. Since most churches visited by the researcher utilized five-piece bands (organist, keyboard player, bass guitar, lead guitar, and drummer), the goal was to approach at least three churches to recruit at least five musicians for the study. There is an abundance of AA male musicians who perform in religious institutions (churches) in the metropolitan area, making accessibility to this population manageable. More importantly, many AA male musicians who perform in this setting were privy to opportunities to perform in other arenas, among other musicians, and within other genres of music due to the flexibility and nontraditional work hours of the institution. Thus, these particular musicians projected a broader perspective of the career experience working in the music industry. The musicians in this study were not contracted with any major music label but were considered independent artists in the music entertainment industry.

Definition of Key Terms

Throughout the study, this researcher referenced key terms that added clarity to concepts, ideas and interactions presented. Unless otherwise noted, below are the definitions of key terms constructed by this researcher:

- **Adversity:** any misfortunate circumstances, events, or situations that hinders healthy and favorable development of a musician's career. This includes experiences that may stem from turmoil faced in the home environment, economic system, social and interpersonal relationships surrounding the musician.
- **Career Advancement:** gaining experience in multiple professional fields in order to create a unique and versatile role for oneself. Elevating to a higher stage of development. In terms of the music profession, advancement is defined by becoming well-known, earning more money and getting hired more frequently (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic, 2012).
- **Career Development:** the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future. Savickas (1997) regards career development as the process of growth and learning that results in increases and modifications of a person's repertoire for vocational behavior.
- **Career Mobility:** movement of a musician across roles and positions within and outside of the music industry that may enhance a musician's potential to increase income, popularity, or job opportunities.
- **Free Agency Workforce:** (unstructured workforce may be used interchangeably) describes the rigidity and undefined organizational patterns that exist in the entertainment music business. This workforce is one that is highly dependent on the flexibility and

creativity of the professionals whose talents translate into productivity in profit. There are no clearly defined career ladders within this workforce at-large; instead the nature of the labor force thrives on free agents.

- **Free Agents:** a professional who prefers an independent, self-governing work style and seeks to find challenging and rewarding work that may enhance the skills that can be transferred to multiple work environments. Free agents are workers who are “free from the bonds of a large institution and agents of their own futures” (Pink, 2001, p. 14). These professionals make career decisions that best suits their personal and professional goals and avail themselves to opportunities that aid in career development and advancement. One of the most important traits of a free agent is that he or she is not at the mercy of an organization, but rather is independent and qualified to provide service upon his or her discretion.
- **Independent Musician:** a musical artist who is not contracted long term through any major record label or major music company. This does not include endorsement deals that may contract artists to represent the major music company through the use of specific instruments.
- **Motivation:** the source that provides energy and direction to behavior (Cloninger, 2004).
- **Musical Giftedness:** a term used to classify musical ability that appears to be more sophisticated than the average person in terms of how quickly one is able to learn music structures, an individual’s memory for music, and the ability to discriminate rhythmic and tonal patterns (Persson, 2009).
- **Professional:** a musician that produces income from performing or producing music and relies on his musical talents to sustain livelihood.

- **Self-efficacy:** refers to the confidence and belief that one can perform.
- **Social capital:** identifies resources available in and through personal and business networks (Baker, 2000).
- **Spiritual Connectedness:** the ability to connect with others spiritually or through the spirit of music.
- **Success:** the indication that a musician has reached personal and professional goals in his career but is defined differently across musicians.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it does not only add to the limited pool of literature about career development for musicians in general but it also bridges the gap between: a) studies that focus on characteristics and contextual aspects of the overall profession; and b) specific recommendations to enhance training and career development for musicians who are AA males. Brown and Lent (2005) pointed out that “many researchers have questioned the applicability of career theories to people of color because of their failure to account for contextual and economic disparities that affect the lives of people of color” (p. 232).

Moreover, this research study highlighted the experiences of AA male musicians by filtering through cultural and historical, interpersonal, and individual factors that aided in understanding the contextual influences affecting career development and advancement in the music profession. Consequently, this research can aid practitioners in accurately defining how to apply career theory models to people of color, specifically males in the AA community. Ultimately, the results of this study can be used to implement workforce and career development training programs for AA male musicians so that they can learn to build necessary competencies

to remain economically self-sufficient, sustain viability in the workforce, and contribute productively to their communities and larger society.

Unique Aspects of the Study

This study is unique in that it targets AA male musicians who have created a working identity that permeates the boundaries of a specific style of music and therefore can share experiences that are not limited to a music genre as most studies in this field have done (Hagger & Johnsson, 2009; Kirschbaum, 2007). Using AA churches as the setting for this research study also added unique value as it supplied the study with a suitable population sample of AA male musicians who receive consistent income but have the flexibility to work in other capacities outside of the religious institution. Considering the importance of cultural and historical factors that influence AA male musicians' career resilience and adaptability, the AA church is an appropriate access point to connect with the population. The church also allowed the researcher to explore spiritual factors that influenced the process of career development and advancement for AA male musicians.

Limitations

One of the obvious limitations of this study is related to demographics. The participants in this study are AA males, and results of the study highlighted themes that are relevant to this particular demographic of musicians and may not apply to female musicians or other male musicians of a different ethnic background. Another limitation of this study dealt with the types of music the musicians will be most familiar with relative to the local market. Based on the culture of the music scene in the metropolitan area where the study took place, as well as the music market in this area (as seen by the marketing, advertising, and promotion for the types of events and programs that occur in this area), these musicians will most likely have experiences

with playing gospel, R&B, funk, and jazz music. Therefore, the results of this study may be particular to these genres and different from the perceptions of musicians who are experienced in genres of music other than those listed above.

The location of where this study took place may also present a limitation in that the views of musicians in this area may differ from those who may live in a different metropolitan area (or any other type of area) as the music scene may be more or less saturated with competition or opportunity for career development and advancement. Since this study targeted musicians who are considered independent from major record labels, the results may be limited to such musicians. Music professionals who are signed as musicians to major labels may have varying perceptions of the steps they have taken to develop and advance their careers in the music industry.

Other limitations deal with methodology and delimitations proposed by the researcher. Although this researcher selected 15 AA musicians to engage in this study, Griffin (2004) warned novice researchers that qualitative studies are less likely to be taken seriously by practitioners or other academic researchers due to small sample sizes. Additionally, the data collection for this study was conducted in the AA musicians' natural performance environment or at a location convenient to the musicians which challenges the ability to replicate the study. Wiersma (2000) mentioned that most qualitative studies are difficult to replicate due to the nature of where and how methods are used to collect data.

Finally, the argument can be made that career development and advancement may be a challenge for all and any musician looking to enhance professional experiences in the music industry. Although this may hold truth, it was the decision of this researcher to investigate the career development and advancement behaviors of AA musicians specifically for two reasons: 1)

results of the study may identify career behaviors that have brought success upon AA male music professionals, and, in turn, impact the career mobility of AA male musicians; and 2) the unique role that gender, race or ethnicity, and sociocultural factors play in career development for people of color is often underestimated in vocational literature and empirical studies (Worthington, Flores, & Navarro, 2005). Identifying themes in career behaviors that account for aspects of career resilience and adaptability as told through the unique experiences of AA male musicians – while taking into consideration the contextual, sociocultural factors that impact these experiences – allowed for this researcher to add to a scarce body of research that may impact the application of career theory and vocational counseling for people of color pursuing careers within a free agency workforce.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the career development steps of AA male musicians by examining their perspective of the individual, cultural and historical, and environmental factors that impact career resilience and adaptability. The study investigated these variables through a conceptual filter that sifts through cultural and historical factors, interpersonal factors, and individual factors to understand the contextual influences affecting career development and advancement in the music profession for AA males. To investigate career development of AA musicians, the researcher used Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (VST) as the conceptual framework and career construction theory (CCT) as the theoretical framework to design a qualitative study for inquiry.

The researcher interviewed fifteen AA male musicians in this study who were consistently paid to perform music through a religious institution located in a metropolitan area of a Southern state, who were not signed to a major music label, and had at least ten years of

music performance experience. Although results of this study may be limited by the genres of music that the AA musicians have performed, the challenges of replicating the study as it is being conducted in the musicians' natural environment, and the special consideration to race and gender, the results identified how AA male musicians remain economically self-sufficient, sustain viability in the workforce, and contribute productively to their communities and larger society despite adversity.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Career advancement for a musician is generally defined by becoming well-known, earning more money, and getting hired more frequently (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). How independent musicians achieve this type of advancement is poorly illustrated or represented in recent workforce development research as evidenced by the paucity of peer reviewed and scholarly articles about professional musicians in the entertainment industry published in the last ten years in major research publications. Moreover, there is an absence of scholarly investigation into the specific challenges that independent African American (AA) male musicians may face during their career expedition and pivotal factors that play a major role in assisting musicians in career advancement. The basis of this study encounters a new dimension of workforce development research in the context of music entertainment by bringing to light the unique circumstances of the AA male musician, those who have gained footage in their careers through performing at religious institutions. Specifically, this research effort focused on the experiences and perceptions of independent AA male musicians who can provide insight on the types of employability skills that enhance resiliency and adaptability in an unequivocal, free-agency workforce structure.

To aid in understanding contextual and theoretical themes surrounding this study, the following literature review examines factors that are related to AA male musicians' career development steps and skills acquired or needed to be successful in this field. The literature presented is organized in four major themes: 1) structural framework of the music industry; 2) factors contributing to career development and advancement for musicians; 3) employment

landscape for AA male musicians; and 4) theoretical support to understanding career theories, career resilience, career adaptability, and AA males.

Structural Framework of the Music Industry

It is important to share literature about the structure of the music industry to consider contextual factors about the workforce that may impact career development and advancement for musicians in general. Highlighting the alignment between the music industry and a free agency workforce provided contextual support as to what skills are necessary for a musician to possess. Understanding some of the changes that have taken place in the industry also provides context as to how independent musicians can create opportunities for themselves. It is equally important to share research that explains the linkage between independent musicians and free agents.

Music industry as a free agency workforce. Stein and Evans (2009) defined the music industry as the “business of recording, publishing, distributing and marketing recorded music” (p. 96). Passman (2012) outlined the industry structure by highlighting the role of major record companies and independent record distributors. These major music recording companies include Warner Music Group, EMI, Sony Music Entertainment, and Universal Music Group (Andersen, 2010; Passman, 2012; Stein & Evans, 2009). These companies are designed to make money from artists’ unique musical giftedness – a term used to classify musical ability that appears to be more sophisticated than that of the average person in terms of how quickly one is able to learn music structures, an individual’s memory for music, and the ability to discriminate rhythmic and tonal patterns (Persson, 2009). Independent record distributors are those companies that are not owned by the major record labels but may contract with them to provide specialized services to other independent distributors (Passman, 2012). Whether made by major record companies or an independent distributor, deals and contracts that are signed depend on the potential of the artist or

musician to create, produce, or perform music that resonates with consumers. The skills, talents, and gifts of these professionals are the source of the music industry.

The link between the music entertainment industry and the concept of free agency is related to the adaptable organizational architecture of the business. Barner (1994) described a free agency workforce in terms of its employee base structure which generally includes three groups: core employees (professionals who work in specific divisions of the major music label companies), supplemental employees (workers who are retained through contract or temporary services to meet the needs of the company such as artists and musicians), and outsourced work entities (the independent distributors who are strategically utilized to support elements of the music business). The functionality of each employee group adds unique flexibility and cost-effective strategies to the music business industry. Implications about how an independent AA male musician navigates through any if not all these employee groups (despite adversity) without being signed to a major record label was a point of interest for this study.

Changes in the music industry. The music industry has undergone quite a few changes since the development of Thomas Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1877 – the device used to record and replay sound (Cottrell, 2010) – and the creation of the gramophone, which became the key device to mass replication of music within the industry during the late 1890's (Wueller, 2013). Stein and Evans (2009) highlighted the progression of the music industry from the late 1800's until current times to expose the importance of understanding the music business, trends that dominate consumer behavior, and the adjustments musicians must make to stay viable in the business. The authors focused on the fact that the “recorded music industry has been in a state of tight oligopoly...this means the music industry was and continues to be controlled by just a few major companies” (Stein & Evans, 2009, p. 97). In a study to investigate the

organization of the U.S. music industry and the effects it has had on diversity and innovation in American popular music, Lopes (1992) revealed that the major music labels monopolize large scale manufacturing, distribution, and access to radio, television, and film; the method of monopolization is how these companies maintain control. From a business perspective, the oligopoly structure gives major recording companies the authority and freedom to determine all financial risks and rewards of a signed artist and employ business deals that yield profitability and longevity of the business while making it difficult for artists to have an upper hand.

Anderson (2010) explained that the dominant players of the industry follow business models that thrive on content production for analogue distribution channels, and this practice has kept them in control of the industry for decades (Lopes, 1992). Majority of the revenue collected during the early years of the music business was generated by album sales. In the 1950s recorded music was the preferred programming format, and the boom of rock 'n' roll music positioned album sales to be the heart of the major recorded music companies' vitality (Stein & Evans, 2009). However, according to Sen (2010), Spotts (2010), and Suhr (2012), the music industry oligopoly was threatened by three major changes in the twenty-first century: 1) independent record labels; 2) digital technology; and 3) file sharing across the internet. During the boom of Rock'n'Roll music, independent labels gained significant market share by signing rock 'n' roll and R&B artists and musicians. The development of the MP3 format allowed for music files to be digitally stored, and the use of the internet changed the way music was consumed and distributed. Wueller (2013) offered a synopsis for this detrimental turn in the music industry:

In the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, sales of sound recordings grew an average of 20% a year and infamous 'CD boom' from the mid-1980s to early 2000s produced unimaginable sales and profits figures. While the digitization of music proved immensely valuable until the end of the second millennium, the advent of widely accessible internet access reversed the fortunes of the recorded music industry. (p. 596)

Sen (2010) affirmed that “the world of music production, consumption and distribution has changed, and the shift is placing the power pack into the hands of the artists and fans” (p. 1). As a result of this shift in the industry, musicians are positioned to be in control of their own careers as independent artists “without any interference from meddling record companies” (Sen, 2010, p. 1), but this comes with the price of skill and knowledge about how to navigate as a free agent.

Independent musicians as free agents. According to Lincoln and Raftery (2011), a free agent is a professional who prefers an independent, self-governing work style and seeks to find challenging and rewarding work that may enhance the skills that can be transferred to multiple work environments. A key characteristic of free agents’ work and lifestyle is their freedom and flexibility to be available for projects and employment opportunities that fit their career goals. Ivory (1986) noted that the independent professional has the largest earning capacity in the entertainment industry.

Based on the description of a free-agent, many independent musicians who are not signed with a major record label can be classified as free agent professionals. These musicians tend to commit to overlapping paid (and unpaid) freelance opportunities in order to build beneficial career experiences that will serve them in their pursuit of career advancement (Beeching, 2005; Feder, 1984; Kirschbaum, 2007). With intent to add definition to the career patterns of musicians, Bartleet, Bennet, Bridgstock, Draper, Harrison, and Schippers (2012) introduced the concept of “portfolio careers” to describe how Australian musicians develop viable and profitable careers that include diverse employment arrangements and activities. These arrangements are often considered support jobs related to managing, accounting for, and technically supporting music or teaching (Bartleet et al., 2012; Beeching, 2005; Feder, 1984;

Kirschbaum, 2007) as these jobs are flexible in nature and tend to offer adaptable schedules for musicians to meet other performance commitments and career goals.

It is important to note that not all independent musicians strive to be signed with a major record label. Stein and Evans (2009) explained that many musicians find ways to make sufficient income and satisfying careers without signing with a major record labeled as performers.

Performances are “only the end product of a long process of organization, administration, financing, promotion, [and] production...all of which involve talented and committed people who love and know music” (Feder, 1984, p. 38). Although performing on concert tours for major record labels is one of the top-paying opportunities for musicians, Passman (2012) warned musicians that signing with a major record label potentially means surrendering control of certain aspects of the music production and creation process as well as passing up other career related experiences that may otherwise be critical to career advancement. Prospering as a free agent may be more fitting to the career goals for an independent musician. However, navigating as a free agent requires that musicians engage in career self-management behaviors to sustain a satisfying career under the pressures and challenges of a free agency workforce.

Factors Contributing to Career Development and Advancement

In a longitudinal exploratory study of the life-span development of professional musicians, Manturzevska (1990) concluded that social-cultural and biological factors, intrinsic motivation, teacher and colleague support, and a life-long process of enculturation and adjustment to changes in the environment often influence career and professional development of a musician. To support these findings, career development research (Neuenschwander & Kracke, 2011; Slaney & Brown, 1983) pointed out that social and economic experiences people face impact the development of their lifestyle, behavior, and career choices. How a person is able to

negotiate and navigate through changes in the industry by establishing beneficial networks and support is a key component. Thus, it is imperative to discuss the literature that outlines the importance of economic, personal, and social or environmental factors impacting career development and advancement for musicians, as well as provide an overview of literature that speak to employability skills, training, and organizational support that influence career mobility for musicians.

Economic influences. When investigating how musicians develop their careers and advance in their field, one must consider the role of economic influences that shape the mobility of the professional. Many aspiring musicians and graduates operate in the frame of mind that a musician's career mainly consists of practicing and performing (Beeching, 2005; Jorgensen, 2002) as these are the two elements embedded in the curriculum of music courses and technical education in this field. Much in contrast with this frame of thinking is the complexity, diversity, and current consumer climate in the music industry that musicians must sift through in order to establish and develop a career in this field (Feder, 1984; Beeching, 2005). Music Trades Magazine (2013) released an article that disclosed challenges and opportunities facing the music industry and what major music suppliers and retailers believe are strategies that could have been used to combat challenges. Within the article, many music retail professionals spoke of new consumer buying trends and instrument retailing practices that have been perpetuated by increased online activity and digital lifestyles, encouraging retailers to become more innovative with their branding approach through the use of musician appearances, creative event planning, and musician training and development opportunities. In consideration of this, independent musicians must have their eyes and ears open to the trends in different segments of the music

industry to realize alternative employment opportunities outside of traditional practice and performance activities.

Trends in the music industry are driven by consumer demands. As the music industry continues to embrace newly rising technologies (Andersen, 2010; Sen, 2010; Spotts, 2010; Wueller, 2013), independent musicians are presented with opportunities (and charged with the responsibility) to produce, market, and distribute their own music in such a way that appeals to diverse market groups or unique market groups with the use of social media sites and internet platforms (Hracs & Leslie, 2014; Suhr, 2012). In pursuit of expanding and sustaining their fan base and performance audiences, independent musicians must be creative in how they appeal to the audiences on stage. Hracs and Leslie (2014) conducted case studies with independent musicians to examine the essence of aesthetic labor within creative industries. These studies exposed that independent musicians are more attentive to the visual components of their live performances and developing more emotional and aesthetic content that resonates with multiple digital communities across different stages and platforms. How well a performance “looks” coupled with how well the musician sounds may be the elements that motivate media traveling power across the internet.

To build a career in music means to understand and utilize the social, cultural, and economic capital a musician may have to advance from one point of success to another. Kirschbaum (2007) expanded on this idea of “capital” when describing how musicians are able to capitalize on their: 1) social surroundings (getting social networks to support their work); 2) cultural acceptances (playing with and impressing other experienced musicians); and 3) economic opportunities (choosing performances that have financial or professional benefit). In terms of industry economics, Vogel (2004) explained that how much artists and musicians get

paid in talent royalty “depends on the degree to which the artist is in demand” (p. 206). Since there are comparatively few permanent performance jobs in music for independent musicians (Bartleet et al., 2012), musicians must be attentive to economic demands and consumer climate of the music industry (Timmons, 2013) in order to forge ahead with career sustainability and advancement.

Personal factors. As a music professional, it is imperative to generate a “personal vision” in order to establish a dynamic career in the music industry (Timmons, 2013, p. 20). Although necessary training and skill development are key elements to the career advancement process, there are personal factors that influence the action plan to carry out that personal vision. MacNamara, Holmes, and Collins (2006) interviewed top-level musicians to identify the challenges at each stage of musical development with specific interest to highlight psychological characteristics that enable career development. These researchers concluded from the data collected that natural ability, dedication, self-belief, planning, adaptation, willingness to learn, and determination are a few of the personal factors that contribute to enhancing and advancing a career in music. Jaap (2011) reported that a musician’s passion, drive, and self-efficacy play an important role in overcoming unexpected experiences, searching for business opportunities, and adapting to changes in circumstances due to environmental challenges. Likewise, Ibarra (2003) explained the importance of establishing a working identity through inevitable career and life transitions. The author emphasized that after transitions, individuals often have to reconsider not only the kind of work they want to do but also what kind of person they want to be. This revelation leads to understanding the kind of sacrifices that need to be made for the person to grow into the new self and working identity.

Cutler (2010) revealed that, “The music business is first and foremost about people. Not music. Not business. Not money. Not talent. People” (p. 138). This author asserted that interpersonal skills are by far the most significant skill set musicians can possess, just as important as musical ability in most cases. However, this skill set goes beyond the necessary abilities that Lewis and Oney (2014) suggested are game changers for musicians, that is, to be savvy communicators and work well with others. The interpersonal skills that Cutler (2010) referred to include those that speak of possessing positivity, loyalty, optimism, and charisma as these personal character factors help to foster harmonious interactions between musicians and their co-workers, employers, venue owners, supporters, mentors, and caretakers.

Social and environmental factors. Johnsson and Hager (2008) conducted a case study with musicians who participated in a music development program to investigate the elements of “informal learning across a variety of workplaces” (p. 528). The researchers pointed out that the relationships musicians form within and outside of the business are key components in the process of cultivating opportunities of advancement and support. These relationships also impact the skills needed for continued learning and development as a musician. Hagar and Johnsson (2008) suggested that musicians who are engaged in mentoring relationships with seasoned and experienced professionals are more likely to learn how to advance their careers. In a study that investigates the practices and infrastructure of United States theaters, Ragsdale (2009) revealed that many midcareer artists are reliant on “individuals who were passionate about the talents of particular artists and who invested substantial time, energy, and resources in these [performers] over time” (p. 2).

With evidence in the literature that suggests that musicians rely on multiple sources of income and mentoring relationships to establish and develop their careers, researchers interested

in investigating the career development patterns of musicians must consider the impact of social and economic factors. Further research on how musicians break into various markets to gain economic stability and how these musicians make and maintain necessary networks may be extremely helpful in identifying career behaviors that stimulate career development for aspiring musicians.

Employability skills for musicians. A career as a musician requires that a professional possess more than technical skill or high musical ability (Beeching, 2005; Johnsson & Hager, 2008; Lewis & Oney, 2014; Manturzevska, 1990). Due to the competitive climate of the music business, there are certain entrepreneurial and social skills musicians should have as well as decisions that musicians should make to gain traction in their profession. Kirschbaum (2007) conducted a qualitative study with jazz musicians to explore how these musicians make decisions when faced with career choices. The author inferred through this research that musicians in the industry must partake in an ongoing process of career self-management, which requires the development and maintenance of adaptive career identity. Due to digitization, globalization, and deregulation of music, musicians must be able to reform and refresh the way they approach music markets and constantly evaluate where they fit in the industry (Bartleet et al., 2012). In order to do that, musicians must know how to recognize and create performance opportunities. Weissman (1979) and Beeching (2005) suggested that musicians find opportunities through residency work or volunteer experiences that put the work of musicians at the disposal of various demographics and markets. Furthermore, recognizing creative opportunities is a skill that allows musicians to apply and distribute work as opposed to just developing and generating music.

Additionally, Bartleet et al. (2012) reported that musicians must have “meta-capabilities” relative to disciplinary agility, social networking capability, creative enterprise, and career-self marketing in order to engage in career development and advancement. This body of research also highlighted that musicians work within a larger sector of a diverse industry considering that they have footing in creative industries and cultural industries; thus, the skills mentioned above should be transferrable across and beyond both types of industries. Beeching (2005) also added the following skill set to this list in order for musicians to manage a successful music career: negotiation skills, time-management skills, budgeting and financing skills, teaching skills and experience, and publicity and public speaking or presentation skills.

Training and organizational support. To ensure the vitality of a career in the music business, musicians must develop the necessary skills outlined above. A key question is where and how these skills are developed. Traditional institutional settings are limited to focusing on technical skill and musical development of the musician in a particular genre or style of music (Johnsson & Hager, 2008). However, complementary learning experiences and training must happen aside from formal music courses that are dedicated to technical improvement. Bartleet et al. (2012) supported the notion that skills that need to be acquired are those beyond talent taught in formal music courses. Johnsson and Hager (2008) questioned whether or not music schools can offer the type of learning experiences and training imperative for music students to become prepared for a viable career as a musician. Jaap (2011) and Lacaille, Koestner, and Gaudreau (2007) affirmed that classroom structures and strict curriculum may pose constraints on the types of learning activities that may be best suited for individuals in pursuit of learning or performing popular music.

Ragsdale (2009) mentioned the potential that performing arts programs and small artist-driven companies may have in creating supportive learning and training environments to enhance creativity and professional development for artists and performers. Specifically, the author stated that younger professionals in the creative fields encourage larger foundations to fund the “fertile stew of small organizations they believed took risks and did innovative work” (Ragsdale, 2009, p. 2). Uscher (1990) revealed that the presence and importance of service organizations provide critical support and assistance to musicians. These organizations are mostly nonprofit organization with 501c3 tax status.

Since this current research study recruited AA male musicians who were financially supported by religious institutions, the goal was to inquire if AA male musicians believe these institutions added value to their career development and advancement in terms of support, training, or cultural/social capital. Considering this detail of the study, this literature review dives into the role that church may play in the lives of AA male musicians who are employed by these institutions. First, one must consider the role that church plays in the AA community to understand the significance of the church setting to AA male musicians. Researchers attest that Black churches have been significant institutions in shaping the economic, political, and social progression of the AA community over many decades (Billingsley & Caldwell, 1991; Brown & Gray, 1994; Este, 2004; Johnson, 2008). With music being of great importance to the Black church experience (Jackson, 1988; Weekes, 2005), musicians in this arena are considered essential assets to worship services. On the other hand, Weekes (2005) asserted that as the result of gospel music gaining significant headway in the music industry, church musicians are positioned to gain unique performance opportunities at major corporation-sponsored events that are centered on gospel music and feature nationally acclaimed gospel artists.

In the context of playing gospel, musicians who perform for Black churches are accustomed to blending sacred (text) with secular music in “a hybrid musical form, incorporating improvisation, rhythmic patterns, tonal variations of African music present in the blues... using synthesizers, strings, brass, and the electronic musical styles of the burgeoning funk, rock and roll, and soul music” (Weekes, 2005, p. 46-47). R. Pleasant elaborated on few of the benefits of playing gospel music in the Black church (personal communication, July 17, 2015): 1) musicians master the art of transcription (being able to transcribe sounds to music notes) as most Black churches do not provide sheet music; 2) instruments in the “Black church” are usually not top quality (due to budget restraints), and as a result, musicians learn to be flexible and creative in achieving top quality sound using limited resources; 3) musicians learn how to adapt quickly and learn to compromise under spontaneous or unforeseen circumstances as a result of being expected to play behind unprepared or unplanned guest preachers, artists, or choirs who may perform for a worship service; and 4) musicians learn to play music by ear (as expected in the Black church).

Although much of the literature details pertinent skills needed to be successful in a music career, it is important to acknowledge the role that organizations or social agencies (such as the church) play in offering assistance, training, or access to gaining necessary skills to be successful as a musician. Since there is a gap in the literature that clearly defines how musicians acquire those skills through these organizations, it was the objective of the current researcher to explore how AA male musicians utilize external supports to build career resilience and adaptability on their journey to career development.

Employment Landscape for AA Male Musicians

To explore the phenomenon around career development and advancement for AA male musicians, it is important to examine the employment landscape for these professionals to gain an understanding of the climate and perpetual unemployment patterns in which AA males must thrive in order to gain footing in their careers and overcome adversity. There is more than one source of information that allows researchers to find empirical data and evidence that identifies the employment landscape for musicians (and specifically for AA male musicians).

Subsequently, this review of literature approaches inquiry by sharing data on the labor force for AA males in the United States, career barriers for AA males, and career barriers for musicians.

Labor force for AA males in United States. The Artist Revenue Streams Project is a cross-genre, multi-method examination of how US-based musicians' revenue streams are changing and why these changes are occurring. Thomson (2012) revealed during this examination that there is no reliable strategy that can be used to measure the size of the U.S. musician population because the definition of what constitutes a musician is not universal. This author asserted that there is no certification or qualifying test that is recognized to define a musician; there is no one organization that recognizes all musicians; and the government's counting method excludes a large portion of the musician population. Bartleet et al. (2012) conducted extensive census data research to find that many musicians do not indicate "performing" as their main source of income since these professionals search for supplemental work opportunities to secure financial stability in their careers. As a result, some musicians may be associated with other industry careers within labor categories besides entertainment (Bennett, 2008). This being the case, it was necessary to look at the employment landscape in general for

AA males in the United States as opposed to specifically examining the employment landscape for musicians.

Data collected from the Current Population Survey of 60,000 households across the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014) showed that the AA population has one of the highest unemployment rates of any ethnic groups in the United States and has been for over 50 years. A report released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) indicated that AA had the lowest labor force participation rate in 2013 at 61.2 percent, and AA adult males (at 67.2 percent) were the least likely to participate in the labor force among adult men (age 20 and above).

Bigler, Averhart, and Liben (2003) examined AAs' perceptions of the impact that racial segregation in the workforce has on occupational status and vocational interests. These researchers found that when compared to European Americans, African Americans are disproportionately represented in lower status jobs, and even when higher status jobs are attained, these individuals are often inhibited from further advancement due to the "glass ceiling" effect. To support these findings, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) indicated that of the AA males who are employed, many of them work in production, transportation, material moving occupations, utilities, and public administration industries. Blake and Darling (1994) reported that there is an overconcentration of AAs employed in the subordinate primary sector in jobs that are not as well paid (and are less secured) compared to independent primary sector jobs. Although employment numbers of AA males may be high in those fields, the employment-population ratio for AA males (58.2%) was lower in comparison to other men associated with the other largest race and ethnicity groups (Whites 60.7%, Asian 62.2%, and Hispanic or Latinos 63.7%), which continues the long standing pattern of AA males falling behind the employment

curve (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Even in the music business, Weissman (1979) reported that the “employment of Black executives lags behind in the large record companies, and when they are employed, it is usually in production, sales, and promotion capacities that relate to Black music” (p. 193). This data is important to acknowledge as it leads into further investigation of career patterns and employment obstacles that AA males face while developing their careers.

Career barriers for AA males. McWhirter (1997) conducted a study that revealed the importance of understanding how larger social forces of racism, sexism, and classism form a context within career and educational attainment of people of color. Although the variable of race is not often prevalent in career development literature (Worthington, Flores, & Navarro, 2005), there is a host of research that provides insight to the plight of AAs’ career advancement due to workplace and employment discrimination (Cornileus, 2012; Fernandes & Alseed, 2014; Mong & Roscigno, 2009). According to Barrett, Cervero, and Johnson-Bailey (2004), AAs continue to be plagued by racism and discrimination which hampers their career development. Mong and Roscigno (2009) introduced in a study workplace discrimination cases that describe the experiences of AA men who face employment discrimination. This study verified workplace documentation of discriminatory firing, hiring, on-going racial harassment, and discriminatory promotional practices affecting AA males. Franklin and Boyd-Franklin (2000) introduced the invisibility syndrome to explain how the psychological well-being of AA males is impacted by discrimination and perceived prejudices, which ultimately affect their adaptive behaviors and social health related to professional mobility:

This subjective sense of psychological invisibility takes the form of a struggle with inner feelings and beliefs that personal talents, abilities, and character are not acknowledged or valued by others, nor by the larger society, because of racial prejudice...Visibility for African Americans is frequently a day-to-day process of

choice between a societal assimilated identity based on an Anglo-European norm, and an identity incorporating the distinctiveness of being African American. (pp. 33, 35)

The experience of invisibility as a result of discrimination and racism plays a huge role in the barriers that exist between AA males and career development.

Aside from discrimination, there are other career barriers affecting AA males that deserve attention. According to Fernandes and Alsaed (2014), the chances for AA males to gain employment are significantly less compared to whites as the “requirement for soft skills such and interaction skills and motivational skills is high” (p. 63). Franklin and Boyd-Franklin (2000) posited that many AA males lack marketable skills, which may play a role in the inability to gain employment. Geographic location and community conditions also impact the probability of finding suitable employment. Jargowsky (2016) reported that “African Americans live in neighborhoods where poverty averages 23 percent; for Hispanics, the figure is 21 percent. In contrast, whites live in areas where poverty averages 13 percent” (n.p.). This author suggested that the disparities among ethnic groups who live in poverty-stricken neighborhoods have implications for educational quality, health, and economic opportunities. These areas often lack sufficient academic achievement resources, positive role models, employment opportunities, and access to affordable, healthy food (Jargowsky, 2015). Payne (2003) provided a framework for understanding poverty, offering that poverty is the extent to which an individual goes without the necessary resources of survival (i.e., financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships/role models, knowledge of hidden rules). Payne continued to explain that these resources are vital to the success of an individual.

Career barriers for musicians. Musicians face unique barriers with regard to career development and advancement. Bennett (2008) framed barriers as “dilemmas” in the musician’s

environment, in the concept of success, and in education and training. Bennett offered the following as an example of the environment serving as a barrier: “Weak cultural intelligence and ineffective communication contribute to a less than satisfactory environment that inhibits the potential for ...musicians to create sustainable careers” (p. 121). A career barrier related to the dilemma of success has much to do with the professional identity of a musician. It is often misconceived that the sole role of a musician is to perform, yet Bennett (2008) exposed the reality for musicians who must acquire non-performance roles to their career portfolio in order to self-define (and be recognized) as a professional musician. Simply “performing” does not ascertain professional leverage in a musician’s career; instead, the “diverse range of activities that represent holistic cultural practice” (p. 123) provide support toward career development and advancement for musicians. To illustrate the barriers that attribute to training and education, Bennett emphasized the importance of formal education in music while criticizing the lack of formal experiences offered through training that enhance the necessary skills needed to be a professional.

AA male musicians often face other unique barriers that deal with their environment, professional identity, and education. According to R. Pleasant (personal communication, July 17, 2015), a local AA male musician, AA musicians are most likely exposed to music at a young age by a close relative, by another household member, or through church experiences. He affirmed that rarely in these cases are younger musicians financially (or emotionally) supported to attain the formal education needed to pursue music as a career path. Aside from the struggle to afford college, AA musicians combat cultural dilemmas when it comes to gaining encouragement and support from parents or guardians (who are not musicians or entertainment professionals) to pursue music as a profession. Pleasant explained that older generations within the Black

community see “church” and “clubs” as the context in which music exists, which impacts their understanding of what it takes to pursue music as a career. Pleasant added that the older generations believe when performing for church, talent is not something that needs nurturing because it comes from God. The result of this mentality builds reluctance around the idea that “music” is a viable career path for musicians.

Theoretical Support

Gaining a full perspective of the work and career development steps of AA male musicians can be supported by the influences and understanding of career development theories, theories and conceptual knowledge of career resilience and adaptability, and AA male theory. This section offers an overview of career development theory.

Career development theories. There are many theorists who have contributed to the thrust and utility of career development theories in career counseling and career development, most of which have adopted a few assumptions that underpin the essence of the career development theory. Montross and Shinkman (1992) outlined these four assumptions: 1) career development is a continuous process over the span of an individual’s life; 2) career development is attributed by career adjustment and career choice; 3) both career choice and career adjustment is influenced by content and process factors; and 4) specific career development theories tend to focus on either content experienced in the career or the process of career choice or adjustment.

Although there are different career development theories that provide insight to various aspects of understanding the career planning and development process, theoretical approaches to career development are generally categorized in five general groups: trait and factor theories, situational and sociological theories, decision making theories, personality theories, and development theories (Gray & Herr, 1998). There are some variations as to how the general

categories are labeled; for example, Isaacson and Brown (1993) offer social learning theories and economic and sociological theories as categories. However, this researcher will refer to the former list to provide details for each theoretical category.

Trait and factor theories. The trait and factor approach to career development theory derives from the psychology of individual differences (Zaccaria, 1970). This approach encompasses the assumption that individuals can most effectively be matched to an appropriate occupation if unique personal characteristics are given consideration. Gray and Herr (1998) mentioned a few of these characteristics as factors that “can be observed and reliably measured” (p. 116) such as aptitudes, interests, values, psychomotor abilities, energy levels, and temperaments. Theorists who often utilize the trait-and-factor theory believe that if one can understand his or her unique constellation of traits and characteristics, then he or she can prioritize these characteristics based on the occupational and educational requirements of the career experience. This suggests that occupational choices are motivated more by one’s consciousness and cognition as opposed to the psychological and emotional disposition. This approach is supported by five basic assumptions (Isaacson & Brown, 1993, p. 23):

- 1) Vocational development is largely a cognitive process in which individuals use reasoning to arrive at decisions;
- 2) Occupational choice is a single event;
- 3) There is a single right goal for everyone making decisions about work;
- 4) A single type of person works in each job; and
- 5) There is an occupational choice available to each individual.

Situational and sociological theories. Another approach to career development has been generated by situational and sociological theories that suggest that the development of an

individual's career patterns and behaviors are products of the interactions this individual has with and within his or her own personal environment. Consequently, the individual's cultural, historical, and political boundaries marked by social and economic class ultimately can influence the choices a person is likely to consider, make, and implement (Zaccaria, 1970). Situational and sociological theories take into consideration many factors of a person's situation that may impact career decision making – factors such as social grouping, geographical setting, historical periods in which the individual was born or reared, economic advantages or disadvantages, gender, race, or educational and intellectual level to name a few. Situational and sociological theories emphasize that behaviors occur in context and must be analyzed with consideration to such context. An individual's social structure serves as the contextual fabric in which a person forms his or her identity, belief system, and life course.

Considering the importance placed on the contextual fabric of an individual and its influence on career decision making, situational and sociological theories become particularly relevant when discussing AA males and their path to career success. Zaccaria (1970) stated, "If one's gender and one's race has been an obstacle to access certain opportunities, it takes extraordinary amounts of desire, persistence, and ability to gain access to such opportunities" (p. 125). This study took interest in the contextual factors that surround the AA musician and ultimately how one becomes adaptable and resilient throughout situations and sociological circumstances that occur within and how these factors impact their career.

Decision making theories. Decision making theories of career development derive from a long line of models of motivation that sprouted during the industrial psychology era and are mostly concerned with the process of how people choose and make decisions (Gray & Herr, 1998). It is important to note that many career development theories consider the decision-

making process in career choice and career adjustment but do not attend to how those decisions are made (Isaacson & Brown, 1993). John Krumboltz, who is most known for his development of social learning theory (SLT), has earned an exception as he proposed in his SLT that there are four influences to career decision making (Monstross & Shinkman, 1992): 1) genetic endowment, 2) environmental conditions, 3) learning experiences, and 4) task approach skills. The decision-making approach in career development emphasizes that an individual's perception of self-efficacy and personal beliefs play a major role in motivation and choice in career behaviors and patterns. Gray and Herr (1998) explained that personal values and active self-assessments of risks, possible outcomes, and alternative solutions are processed and considered when making career related decisions. Montross and Shinkman (1992) highlighted a few theoretical propositions that give foundation to career decision making and behavior:

- 1) An individual is more likely to enter an occupation if he or she has been positively reinforced when performing relative career activities or has been exposed to positive images, words, or valued models that advocate or yield positive reinforcement for relative career activities.
- 2) An individual is less likely to engage in an occupation if he or she (or a valued model) has been punished or not reinforced to perform in relative career activities. This is also true if the individual experiences a valued model expressing negative words about the occupation or relative career activities.
- 3) An individual is more likely to learn appropriate career decision skills if he or she (or an observed model who is valued) experiences positive reinforcement for relative career activities. This is also true if an individual has access to people, resources, and

information about the career, relative activities, or associated processes within the occupation.

- 4) An individual is less likely to learn skills, if he or she (or an observed valued model) experienced punishment or no reinforcement for behaviors, or do not have access to people, resources, or information related to career behaviors, processes, or occupation.
- 5) An individual will enter into an occupation if he or she has been exposed to opportunities around employment or training in the field, has expressed interest or preference in the field, or has attained skills that match occupational requirements.
- 6) An individual is less likely to enter into an occupation if the cost associated with preparation is greater than the eventual return or if he or she has been denied access to the minimum resources necessary for entering the occupation.

Personality theories. A personality approach to career development theories gives meaning to an individual's actions based on an individual's intrinsic needs and desires, which are not all entirely shaped by social and institutional mechanisms (Grey & Herr, 1998) but are inclusively attributed by one's personality and one's interaction with one's environment(s). Two theorists who have made a significant mark in vocational psychology in reference to the personality approach to career development theory are John Holland and Ann Roe. Holland (1959) criticized other theories of vocational choice, claiming that they only fall on one side of the spectrum, either too broad or too specific, and suggested that theorists and practitioners attend to a more comprehensive theory by considering the dynamic relationship between "the occupational environments, the person and his development, and the interactions of the personal and the vocational environment" (p. 35). The core of Holland theory is that individuals' personalities can be categorized into six types (better known as the RIASEC model): realistic,

investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Each one of these types can be characterized by a person's interests, abilities, values, beliefs, and characteristics (Nauta, 2010). Additionally, how these personality types are combined to make up an accurate depiction of the combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and other personality factors yields suggestive work environments that are best suited for the individual.

Roe's (1956) career development theory is also very individually focused as it considers the intelligence and temperament of an individual based on heredity factors, interests, and attitudes that are shaped by economic limitations, race, gender, and culture as well as the occupation's ability to satisfy needs that are individualized and personal. Another unique and most notable aspect of Roe's theory is the explicit linkage between a person's family background and child-rearing practices and its influence on a person's development needs and ultimately one's career choice and related career decision activities (Brown & Voyle, 1997; Dawis, 1997). Roe has been noted to carry forward much of Holland's theory as she proposed eight occupational groups (which are similar to Holland's RIASEC model): service, business contact, organization, technology, outdoor, science, general culture, and arts and entertainment. To summarize, Gray and Herr (1998) reiterated that both Roe's and Holland's theories postulated that the appropriateness of an occupation for an individual is heavily dependent upon an individual's personality (which is primarily created and developed from early experiences), and one seeks an occupation or makes career decisions that best fits his or her needs, interests, and desires.

Development theories. Developmental theories within career development theory examine the influence of time, specifically how occupational choice or career behavior is developed over the span of time. Simply put, occupational choice is one that is negotiated along

a longitudinal process (Gray & Herr, 1998). Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrod, and Herma (1951) revealed that individuals' vocational choices are influenced by their culture, their family, their school, and any valued models who may have the ability to impress upon the minds and decisions that one will make concerning career behaviors. These authors also implied that occupational choice takes place over a minimum of six or seven years. This suggests that there is a "quality of compromise" when one considers the subjective elements that are produced from opportunities and limitations of an individual's reality as he or she confronts an array of influential experiences across his or her lifetime. Donald Super engaged this idea within his theory that he coined "the life-span approach" to career development. Super (1953) surveyed some of the major theories of vocational development with intentions to offer a comprehensive theory that supports notions of the life-span approach and outlined ten propositions that should be noted as pillars to the development theories of career development (pp. 189-190):

- 1) People differ in their abilities, interests, and personalities.
- 2) People are qualified, by virtue of these characteristics, each for a number of occupations.
- 3) Each of these occupations requires a characteristic pattern of abilities, interests, and personality traits, with tolerances wide enough to allow for both some variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each occupation.
- 4) Vocational preferences, competencies, situations in which people live and work, and self-concepts all change with time and experience, making choice and adjustment a continuous process.
- 5) This process may be summed up in a series of life stages characterized as those of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, and these stages may in

- turn be subdivided into: a) the fantasy, tentative, and realistic phases of the exploratory stage; and b) the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage.
- 6) The nature of career patterns is determined by individuals' parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, and personality characteristics, and by the opportunities to which he is exposed.
 - 7) Development through the life stages can be guided, partly by facilitating the process of maturation of abilities and interests and partly by aiding in reality testing and in the development of the self-concept.
 - 8) The process of vocational development is that of developing and implementing a self-concept. Self-concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, neural and endocrine make-up, opportunity to play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role-playing meet with the approval of superiors and fellows.
 - 9) The process of compromise between individual and social factors, between self-concept and reality, is one of role playing.
 - 10) Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend upon the extent which the individual finds adequate outlets for his abilities, interests, personality traits, and values.

Reviewing the major career development theories informed this researcher of the appropriateness to investigate the career development steps of AA male musicians with consideration to tenants of situational and sociological theories. Particularly looking at how AA male musicians overcome adversity in their careers required one to explore literature about career resilience and career adaptability in order to frame the study and support the situational and sociological approach to career development.

Career resilience and career adaptability. When discussing the professional musician as a free agent working in a free agency workforce, it is appropriate to discuss the importance of career self-management. Career self-management is defined by the “proactivity employees show with respect to managing their careers” (De Vos & Soens, 2008, p. 450) and involves two components: 1) a reflective component that takes into consideration the individual’s insight into one’s career goals and aspirations; and 2) a behavior component that refers to the actual behaviors that individuals initiate to manage those career goals. In consideration of the changing work environments where many independent musicians are engaged and employed, the Protean career theory expands the definition of career self-management to include the individual’s ability to “repackage” their knowledge, skills, and abilities to fit the demands of the work situation and remain marketable across employment experiences (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Aspects of career self-management important in this study focus on two key areas that support the AA male independent musicians’ viability in the music business: career resilience and career adaptability.

Resilience is a term used to describe an individual’s ability to recover from some kind of adversity. Napoli (2007) outlined a few characteristics of resiliency to include active coping and problem solving, bonding for a common mission, desire to improve oneself, positive self-concept, internal control, the ability to turn traumatic helplessness into learned helpfulness, and many more. Career resilience refers to the quality of the response that professionals have to obstacles and undesired events that may occur in their career (Goodman, 1994) as seen by their career self-management behaviors. Career adaptability, on the other hand, refers to the “quality of being able to change, without great difficulty, to fit new or changed circumstances” (Savickas, 1997, p. 254). Both concepts relate to the relationship between the individual’s career behavior and the environment, but career resilience is more focused on the impact of career behaviors

during or after adverse circumstances as opposed to emphasizing the purpose for which change needs to be made as with career adaptability.

Career resilience theory. To adequately consider the career development steps of AA male musicians, Career Resilience Theory (CRT) is a point of interest. CRT explores the extent that an individual can resist career barriers or disruptions that may affect the need for achievement, self-confidence, work ethic, willingness and ability to take risks, and the ability to act independently and cooperatively (Arora & Rangnekar, 2014). Individuals who possess career resilience are described as being socially competent (responsive and culturally flexible), having problem-solving skills such as critical and creative thinking, being autonomous (or having a sense of identity, self-awareness, and self-efficacy), and having a strong sense of purpose and belief in the goal-oriented future as seen through a person's optimism, faith, and spiritual connectedness (Benard, 1991). Based on career resilience research and theory in human development, Benard (2014) stressed that resilience is an innate genetic trait that exists in all humans, and it is tied to survival instincts (Ledesma, 2014). There are three concepts associated with career resilience theory: survival, recovery, and thriving (Ledesma, 2014), which also describe the stages that an individual may take during and after adverse circumstances. The key to understanding the power or quality of resilience is to attend to the degree in which an individual utilizes mechanisms and contextual resources to cope with and overcome threats, challenges, and risks that impede development and growth.

The concept of resilience is prevalent in human development research and describes the ability an individual possesses to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune (Benard, 2014; Goodman, 1994; Ledesma, 2014). Collard, Epperheimer, and Saign (1996) introduced the concept of career resilience by stating that its emergence spurred from rapid

changes in the workforce that demanded organizations to rethink the traditional approach to career development. Under the traditional approach, employees relied on a parental organization to sculpt, shape, and ultimately define their career paths (Waterman, Waterman, & Collard, 1994), which only hindered the mobility of employees' careers at the onset of dynamic economic and workforce changes resulting in downsizing, layoffs, and organizational restructuring. The volatility of the workforce environment has led career development researchers to focus on the types of circumstances and behaviors that advocate "self-employment" attitudes within employees to devise a career development strategy that meets the needs of organizations, their employees, and dislocated workers. Hence, the interest of career resilience emerged.

Collard et al. (1996) outlined career self-reliance as a strategy that individuals utilize to build career resilience. They defined career self-reliance as "the ability to actively manage one's work-life in a rapidly changing environment; the attitude of being self-employed, whether inside or outside an organization" (p. 30) and posited that at the core of career self-reliance is a balance between interconnectedness and self-direction. Individuals with career self-reliance are not only aware of their skills, interests, and work ethics, but they know which components and to what degree will bring them career and work satisfaction. This leads to the ability to maintain control and direction during adverse circumstances, which yields career resilience. It was important for the researcher of this study to scout for references of self-reliant behaviors during data collection, as it led to direct indications of career resilience.

Career adaptability. Career adaptability considers a perspective of "change" beyond that which may be caused by adversity in a musician's career. The idea of career adaptability gained recognition from the development of Donald Super's life-span, life-space theory (Savickas, 1997), which looked at careers and their life course from three major vantage points:

developmental, self, and contextual perspectives. Within this theory, Super (1990) postulated that learning and decision-making are integrative variables that make up the career development process. Savickas (1997) made the connection that “learning and decision-making are components of adaptation” (p. 253) and thus “offers a potential bridge across the individual differences, developmental, self, and contextual segments in life-span, life-space theory” (p. 253).

Career adaptability is defined as the readiness to cope with changes to work roles and working conditions (Ebberwein, Krieshok, Ulven, & Prosser, 2004; Super & Knasel, 1981). Goodman (1994) provided deeper insight into the term stating that adaptability is concerned with the ability to face or initiate change to meet an individual’s personal and professional needs. As adults face unpredictability opportunities and challenges in their life, career transitions may follow (Ebberwein et al., 2004). When individuals commit efforts to making career decisions that are more suitable and congruent with other life demands, they engage in career adaptability. As this study sought to understand how AA male musicians are able to engage in career mobility through development and advancement, it was important to investigate experiences that demonstrate career adaptability. Career adaptability rests on the relationship between the individual and his or her environment. Savickas (1997) highlighted that adaptation is focused on the interaction between the individual and the environment in which the individual seeks to survive. Thus, when focusing on career adaptability, it was important to consider contextual factors to understand how and why an individual is able to adapt to career circumstances.

Although the terms career resilience and career adaptability may share similar tenets, this researcher recognizes a clear distinction between the two terms. Career resilience explains the quality of how an individual recovers from career setbacks, which signifies that the behavior is

reactionary. On the other hand, career adaptability demonstrates an individual's willingness and initiative to make changes necessary to suit a new or existing career situation, which can be proactively pursued before changes actually occur. The two constructs provided this research study with a broader theoretical scope of understanding what career behaviors AA male musicians believe are imperative for overcoming obstacles in their career and planning for new challenges and obstacles in the future.

African American male theory. Aside from contextual factors that shape the relationship between career resilience and adaptability among AA male musicians, the African American Male Theory (AAMT) provide an explanatory base for understanding the phenomena surrounding this demographic and their ability to thrive beyond adversity. Bush and Bush (2013) introduced AAMT, which can be used to articulate the trajectory and position of the AA male musicians in society by drawing attention to pre- and post-enslavement experiences while considering spiritual, psychological, social, and educational development.

The authors postulated that boys and men can best be studied using an ecological systems framework. They pointed out the fact that just as the universe is comprised of organisms and systems that are interconnected, humans exist in bidirectional ecological, cultural, and biological relationships with the environment and with each other. Furthermore, in describing the AAMT, the authors indicate that environmental factors for AA boys and men are very differentiated; and the multidimensional environments serve to influence and shape the development, experiences, outcomes and trajectory of AA boys and men (Swanson, Cunningham & Spencer, 2003).

According to Bush and Bush (2013), there are six tenets of the AAMT theory:

- a. An ecological systems approach is the best way to analyze the individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of African American males.
- b. Being male and of African descent presents uniqueness.
- c. African culture, consciousness, and biology impact and influence the experiences of African American males.
- d. African American males are resilient and resistant.
- e. Every aspect of the lives of African American males is impacted by race, sexism, and racism coupled with classism.
- f. The focus and purpose of study and programs concerning African American males should be the pursuit of social justice.

In essence, the tenets suggest that researchers who are interested in understanding the AA male, must approach inquiry by studying the natural environments in which the AA male interacts to identify unique cultural, biological, hereditary, and socioeconomic influences that help to shape the identity and truth of the AA male experience. These tenets offer considerations when attempting to understand AA male behaviors and development by highlighting how AA male identity is deeply rooted in African culture and impacted by racism, classism, and sexism. Bush and Bush (2014) believed that the research must be anchored in the inquiry of African culture as the African descent of AA men and boys present cultural, biological, and spiritual uniqueness relative to their African origins. Some of these tenets also serve as recommendations for framing research around AA males that seek deeper understanding of their ability to overcome adversity. Research that does not consider these tenets and the impact that African culture has on the

development of personality and behavior in this AA male population can produce faulty or flawed and incomplete results.

AAMT is used to analyze phenomena, experiences, and outcomes that examine how and why AA males are resilient and thriving. AAMT illuminates the resilience that is present in the “inner microsystem (e.g., biology, personality, sexual orientation, beliefs, and perceptions, and intellect), outer microsystem (e.g., family, extended family, home, peer groups, neighborhood, and church), [and] subsystem (e.g. supernatural, spirit, collective will, unconscious, and archetypes)” (Bush & Bush, 2013, p. 11) that engages AA males. Particularly for this study, AAMT added value to the importance of considering contextual factors that influence resilience of the African American male experience and provided support to understanding how AA male musicians can push through challenges that may arise in career development.

The Need for Further Research

To ultimately develop aspects of training that will assist AA male musicians in career development, it is important for researchers to make connections between what steps AA male musicians take to reach their defined success, what skills they feel are required to get there, and how or where these skills were developed. Bartleet et al. (2012) suggested that it is due to the lack of research in this area that musicians’ career patterns are not understood, even by musicians. The issue of limited research then impacts the access, availability, and delivery of adequate training that may influence initial and continued career support for musicians. McCarthy, Brooks, Lowell, and Zakaras (2001) highlighted how important it is to collect longitudinal data on the training and experiences of performing artists (including musicians), their career motivations, employment patterns, and institutional experiences. In addition, Manturzewska (1990) pointed out that there is very limited research on the formative process of

the artistic personality, the professional functioning of a musician, their various social roles, and the structure and dimensions of their professional activity in different stages of life and musical specialization.

The majority of current research concerning career development for musicians consists of descriptive studies that describe the lifestyles, behaviors, and practices of musicians through collecting and analyzing qualitative data. It is extremely imperative that further research is conducted that values the perspective of the musician about the necessary career and professional development steps to advance their careers. Through Kirschbaum's (2007) research, the author discovered unmerited value in the musician's perceptions of successful strategies. When attempting to establish a normative structure in a musician's career, Kirschbaum highlighted that the musician's own trajectory and belief about appropriate actions adds substantial importance to the discussion. The unique perspective of musicians contributes to career theory in this field, as it adds "social structural dynamics to the individual action dimension" (p. 188).

Summary

The literature reviewed by the researcher considered four major themes. The first theme revealed literature about the structural framework of the music industry providing context that shapes the conditions, trends, and changes that exist within the free agency workforce in which an independent musician develops his career. The second theme reviewed in the literature revealed the factors contributing to career development and advancement for musicians. These factors highlighted the economic influences, personal, social and environmental factors, employability skills, and training and organizational supports that impact a musician's career development and advancement. The third theme reviewed the employment landscape for AA male musicians, particularly focusing on literature that discussed the labor force for AA males

and career barriers for both AA males and musicians. The final theme in the literature gave considerable attention to the theories that inform the study related to career resilience, career adaptability, and AA males. Additionally, after reviewing various career development theory approaches, the literature revealed that it is most appropriate to address this inquiry through the lens of situational and sociological theories of career development. This approach suggests that the development of an individual's career patterns and behaviors are products of the interactions this individual has with and within his or her own personal environment. Ultimately, this approach aligns with the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The research aimed to explore the career development steps of African American (AA) male musicians by examining their perspective of the individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that impact career resilience and adaptability. This research study was guided by the following questions:

- 1) What do independent AA male musicians perceive to be key factors in career development and advancement that impact their music careers?
 - a. What are the individual factors that influence career advancement for AA male musicians?
 - b. How do these individual factors impact career advancement?
 - c. Which interpersonal factors influence how AA male musicians interact and socialize with his/her environment to shape their career behaviors?
 - d. How do these interpersonal factors impact career development?
 - e. What are the sociocultural factors that play a role in career advancement for AA male musicians?
 - f. How do these sociocultural factors play a role in career advancement?
- 2) How do independent AA male musicians persist through challenges that may affect career development and advancement?
 - a. What are the major challenges that affect career development and advancement?
 - b. How do challenges affect career development and advancement for AA male musicians?

- c. Which tactics related to survival and recovery has helped AA male musicians to thrive in the music industry?
- d. What strategies are used to prepare for changes that may occur on the job?

It was appropriate to use a qualitative approach in this study so that the researcher was able to discover the variables that were important to make associations between career development steps taken by AA male musicians and their views on the cultural/historical, interpersonal, and individual factors that influenced their adaptability and resilience when developing and advancing in their careers. The experiences shared by AA male musicians shed light on how career decisions and behaviors, internal factors, external skills, resources, and career management strategies played a role in preparing them for and overcoming challenges and opportunities during their career development journey.

Pragmatic Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research design has its roots in social sciences as an effective approach for obtaining rich, culturally specific data about the opinions, values, beliefs, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations (Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). The intent of qualitative research is to gain understanding of a social phenomenon through an investigative process that relies on individuals' perceptions of reality to make sense of a particular situation, process, group, or interaction (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2007). The key to qualitative research design is the data collection and analysis process. Methods of collecting data in qualitative research often requires researchers to go out into the field to "and [get] close enough to the people and circumstances there to capture what is happening...[immersing] oneself in naturally occurring complexity" (Patton, 2002, p. 48).

Considering the necessary participation of the researcher (Patton, 2002), qualitative inquiry separates itself from other scientific methods in that the researcher plays a vital role in the data collection process serving as a primary instrument in most cases. Creswell (2009) explained that in a qualitative approach, the researcher “positions him- or herself” in the research and “collaborates with the participants” (p. 17) to understand meaning and make interpretations. The flexible nature of qualitative design allows for the researcher to be purely led by the data to dive deeper into a phenomenon, which gives way to negotiated outcomes of meanings and interpretations. Schram (2006) reminded novice researchers that in qualitative design, one must feel comfortable knowing the direction but not necessarily the destination of the study.

A pragmatic qualitative research design was used as the strategy of inquiry for this study. According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013), use of this approach dates back to the 1930’s when early researchers were interested in observing human behavior and individual’s experiences as they occurred naturally, while giving intentional consideration to the researcher’s and the participant’s views about the nature of knowledge and reality. To approach the investigation of human behavior in natural settings with respect to unconventional or unique perceptions of reality often requires using combinations of data collection methods or eclectic strategies to address research questions. Pragmatic qualitative research design allowed those researchers to creatively determine the most fitting design and methodology choices for a study (Chenail, 2011). Researchers who take a pragmatic approach to inquiry are more focused on the “what” and “how” of the research problem as opposed to the methods and use all available methods to arrive at an understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2009). To consider the principles of a pragmatic qualitative design means to abstain from “methodological orthodoxy” and “favor...methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological

quality, recognizing that different methods are appropriate for different situations” (Patton, 2002, p. 72).

Beyond the benefit of determining the most suitable data collection methods, a pragmatic qualitative research design is often chosen when researchers seek to provide a descriptive account of an experience or phenomenon and no other research design is appropriate to yield an interpretive perspective of the data collected (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In fact, Savin-Baden and Major offered that “pragmatic qualitative research marks the meeting point of description and interpretation, in which description involves presentation of facts, feelings, and experience in the everyday language of participants, as interpreted by the researcher” (p. 172). This means that a pragmatic qualitative research design allows for the researcher to determine the degree of subjectivity and objectivity he or she wants to have in the data description or interpretation of the study. For instance, on one end of the spectrum there may be studies that use a pragmatic qualitative research design to describe categorical, less interpretive or less abstract research with the ultimate purpose of sharing a descriptive summary of the data. On the other end of the spectrum are those studies that use a pragmatic approach to provide a highly interpretive description of the data that has been strongly influenced by theoretical and analytical frameworks that guide the researcher’s interpretation of the data (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

A pragmatic qualitative research design was an appropriate approach for this study as it allowed for the researcher to intentionally employ specific data collection methods for the purpose of exploring the contextual and complex nature of building a career as a musician from a musician’s perspective. Particularly attending to the musician’s account of events and experiences that have shaped career behaviors, his daily work related tasks and interactions with his environment, and his employment transitions or intentional involvement in career building

activities will require the researcher to record, analyze, describe, and interpret meaning of personal experiences, structures, and processes, all of which may require specific data collection and analysis procedures that are not already packaged in traditional qualitative designs (i.e., ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, or narrative inquiry). Savin-Baden and Major (2013) warned novice researchers to not take lightly the task of collecting the facts within the data, interpreting participants' meaning of those facts, and then coherently communicating these facts for good use. Considering this advice, the researcher provides deliberate justification in the following sections for use of each method within the study and data analysis procedures that was employed to identify individual or personal, interpersonal, cultural, historical, and environmental factors that musicians believed influenced their career development process.

Bounding the Study

Processes. The career behaviors and decisions, hard and soft skills, external resources, and career management strategies were mentioned or highlighted during the data collection process to expose tangible concepts that highlight how AA male musicians overcome challenges and prepare for changes that they may face in the music industry. The goal was to explore a common thread of themes that will lead to results that address how AA male musicians develop and advance in their careers.

Setting. This study took place using various AA churches in the metropolitan area of a Southern state as the gateway for recruiting AA male musicians. The researcher approached churches that employed about 30 musicians (combined) to recruit at least five musicians from each church. The musicians in this study perform or have performed at churches that have large congregations of over 400 members and have an operating budget of approximately \$280,000 or more, with some of these funds allocated to pay musicians on a consistent basis (Chaves,

Anderson, & Byassee, 2009). In most cases, this payment was a consistent source of stable income for musicians while they were engaged in other career or employment activities. Thus, the church provided the researcher access to AA male musicians independent of major record labels who receive consistent income in a metropolitan area of a Southern state. The actual data collection events took place at various locations of the musicians' choosing.

Selection of Participants. The researcher utilized purposeful sampling and snowball sampling techniques to recruit 15 professional AA male musicians. Purposeful sampling is a technique used in qualitative research when the researcher needs to select information-rich cases that will illuminate the questions under study and yield in-depth insight and understanding of a phenomenon as opposed to just empirical generalizations (Patton, 2002). Since the research questions specifically relate to the career development and advancement steps of AA male musicians, it was important to purposefully select AA male musicians who: a) are currently performing (or have performed) in a metropolitan area at a local religious institution; b) can provide proof of experience in playing for nationally acclaimed artists/performers in the music business (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015); c) have the ability to book performance opportunities consistently (Cutler, 2010; Feder, 1984; Hracs & Leslie, 2014) - at least three times in a month; and d) and acquires income that is accounted for by their musical ability that exceeds 50% of net income (Colletti, 2013). These determinants ensured that the participants in the study have information-rich experiences in developing their careers and can articulate steps through their process of career mobility.

Only five musicians were recruited using purposeful sampling; the other ten musicians were recruited through snowball sampling. This is a technique that allows the researcher to utilize recommendations of other musicians that they believe are information-rich cases (Patton,

2002). This technique became useful after the researcher experienced challenges with getting musicians to respond or commit to engaging in the study. Instead of continuously following up with the same musicians from approved churches, the researcher asked for recommendations from other musicians about AA male musicians they believed would have rich information about the experience of an AA male musician. As a result of this technique, ten musicians were initially contacted by the musicians who recommended them, and they were alerted that the researcher would be contacting them about participating in the study. Following the initial contact between recruited musicians and potential participants, the researcher contacted the potential participants directly by phone or through Facebook direct message to get approval to send recruitment email, at which point, the researcher followed the same procedures thereafter to engage them in a formal meeting to review the Informed Consent Form and details of the study.

This study was granted approval by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Arkansas to conduct the research study (see Appendix J). The researcher contacted music directors of three AA mega churches in a metropolitan area by phone, or email, or in person and explained the purpose of the study. The researcher was granted permission from the church leadership (pastor or minister of music) to contact AA male musicians employed by the church who fit the criteria to be a participant for the study. The researcher contacted each musician (with intent to recruit at least five participants from each site) to request participation and provided (by email) an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix E) that articulates the purpose of the research, procedures of how the research will be conducted, details of how data will be used, benefits to the study, rights and risks of participants, and contact information of researcher for consideration (see Appendix F for Example Recruitment Email). Musicians who agreed to participate were contacted by researcher to explain the Informed Consent Form, answer any questions the

participant may have, and schedule an interview. During this initial contact, the musicians were prompted to send to the researcher his resume and biography for review. Due to the length of the interview and observation, the researcher scheduled a different time to meet the musician to formally conduct the interview and observation.

Data Collection Overview

Qualitative inquiry is deemed most appropriate when one is interested in gaining an understanding of the social world and identifying factors that are considered “intangible” or complex (Mack et al., 2005) and may not readily be available without learning from personal experiences in natural settings (Schram, 2006). Gaining knowledge and access of these experiences is more than simply interviewing people and reporting their responses to questions (Creswell, 2008); instead there are specific qualitative methods that yield rich and specific types of data. Creswell (2008, 2009), Patton (2002), and Rubin and Rubin (2012) all presented the four naturalistic qualitative methods for data collection: participant observations, in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis. Each method is designed to reveal specific types of data; and therefore, should be chosen based on the researcher’s purpose for conducting the study. The driving force in any research inquiry is purpose as it dictates decisions about how the research will be conducted, measured, and analyzed (Patton, 2002). This section provides details about the qualitative methods that were used to reveal how AA male musicians take intentional steps to advance professionally while exploring interpersonal, individual, cultural, and historical factors that they believed impact their experiences and influence their ability to overcome adversity in their career.

Document Analysis. Document analysis is a useful form of qualitative data collection and helps to provide context to a research problem, give background information about a

particular subject, or shed light on conditions that may impact specific processes in research phenomenon (Bowden, 2009). Document analysis is quite frequently used in conjunction with other qualitative methods, serving as a strategy to triangulate findings across data sets. Bowden (2009) reiterated that using document analysis for the purpose of seeking convergence and corroboration can “reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study” (p. 28). Bowden also mentioned specific uses for document analysis; one in particular aligns closely with the use of the method within this qualitative inquiry:

“...Information contained in documents can suggest some questions that need to be asked and situations that need to be observed as part of the research. For example, to help generate new interview questions...[demonstrating] how one method can complement another in an interactive way.” (p. 30)

Goldstein and Reiboldt (2004) employed document analysis for the purposes of generating interview questions and explained that the analysis conducted was an imperative step in focusing other participant observation activities and interviews within their study.

In an attempt to uncover the career development of AA male musicians, the researcher collected documents submitted by each participating musician to analyze details of their employment transitions or history of institutional supports within their careers prior to in-depth interviews. Eight participants submitted resumes, and nine submitted biographies. Those participants who did not provide either were asked a series of questions indicated on Resume Replacement Form (Appendix B) to recover information about employment transitions, career history, volunteer experiences, accomplishments, and accolades.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews. In-depth interviewing was an appropriate tool for this study as the researcher focused on the participant’s personal experiences, adaptability strategies, and tools for navigating through adverse circumstances and situations faced on his professional and career development journey. In-depth interviewing is one of the primary tools in

qualitative research, and Rubin and Rubin (2012) described three common characteristics of this method. First, this method is chosen when the researcher is looking for examples, stories, narratives, or personal experiences. Second, interviewers ask open-ended questions and are encouraged to exercise freedom in how the interviewee chooses to elaborate, disagree, or raise new issues to the question. Third, questions asked during the interview are not fixed, giving the interviewer the responsibility to use discretion during the interview process. Mack et al. (2005) summarized the strengths of in-depth interviewing, highlighting that this method yields interpretive perspectives about connections and relationships that exist between beliefs, events, and phenomena.

The interview was guided with prompts and follow-up questions that support the conceptual framework for this study. The researcher employed a semi-structured interview model described by Rubin and Rubin (2012). These authors suggested semi-structured interviews when a researcher has a specific topic to learn about, develops a limited number of questions in advance, and plans to ask deliberate follow-up questions to gain clarity on a specific topic. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to gain perspective about the personal circumstances, life structures, motivational patterns, career experiences, interpersonal situations, and specific processes or strategies related to career decisions and behaviors the participants have employed to navigate career mobility during or in preparation for adverse circumstances. Appendix C includes the In-Depth Interview Protocol that lists the questions that were used in the study. These questions were developed in light of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as a conceptual framework and career construction theory as the theoretical framework for this study. In addition, additional questions were asked of specific participants if the documents submitted to the researcher prior to the interview required clarification. Responses to these questions were

recorded on Follow Up Questions for In Depth Interview Form (Appendix J). These questions were related to contextual cues, motivation patterns, and decisions that prompted career activities or transitions noted on the documents submitted.

Data Collection Procedures

The participants had the option of where they wanted to be interviewed. After an initial meeting with each musician to collect his biography and resume, the researcher conducted a 60 – 90-minute interview. Upon arrival for the interview and before any note-taking, the researcher reiterated the purpose of the research, the procedures of how research would be conducted, details of how data would be used, benefits of the study, and rights and risks of participants; explained what participating in this study meant or required, and confirmed the musician's willingness to participate. Interviews began after the Informed Consent Form was signed, and a copy of the form was provided to the participant.

During the interview session, the researcher recorded handwritten notes on the Researcher Observation Form. The interview was audio recorded using a voice recorder and transcribed for data analysis and interpretation. The tape recorder was placed between the participant and researcher to capture any dialogue that occurred. During and immediately following each interview, field notes were written to describe initial research subjectivity, the setting, the participant's behaviors and nonverbal cues, and the researcher's overall impression and engagement with the interview and environment. These field notes were important as they not only provided the researcher with a source of data but also helped to notate contextual factors that may impede on the data collection process, serving as a key data collection item to evaluate qualitative rigor.

All audio recordings of interviews were transcribed for the purpose of accuracy. Audio recordings were recorded on a digital voice recorder and files were transferred directly onto the researcher's home computer to prepare for transcription process. Once transferred, the recorded file was deleted from the recorder. Audio recordings and interview notes were stored on the researcher's personal hard drive, which is password protected. Hard copies of transcripts, handwritten notes, analytical notes, or associated documents are stored in a locked file cabinet in researcher's home and will be kept for 3 years – after this time, they will be shredded. To ensure that confidentiality is maintained, names of the participants mentioned during the interview session were changed to protect the participant's identity. Each participant received a copy of the transcript(s) associated with the data collection event so that he was able to verify that his words had been captured correctly.

Transcription. All interviews were prepared for denaturalized transcripts. Oliver, Serovich, and Mason (2005) described denaturalism as a transcription practice that is more concerned with the accuracy of meanings and perceptions that construct reality as opposed to precisely depicting the elements of speech that may be revealed during interviews (e.g. stutters, pauses, nonverbal expressions, involuntary vocalizations). All transcripts and research forms were generated in Microsoft® Word ® for easy transcription and storage. To protect the identities of participants, a standard convention was used for identifying the individual participant (and his work). Labels were used to decipher the church site (capital letter A or B; C represented a musician referred by another musician) and musician (labeled using a consecutive number system that begins with the very first musician and through the last musician interviewed in this study) in relationship to the site.

Data Analysis & Interpretation Procedures

In qualitative research design, the data analysis procedures are vital to make sense out of what was just uncovered (Turner, 2010). According to Patton (2002), recording, managing, and tracking data during the data collection process requires deliberate steps and serves as a significant component to supporting qualitative rigor. To accurately analyze data that is collected during this study, the researcher employed specific data organization steps and coding techniques that amplified the interpretation and meaning of the data.

Data organization. During the data collection process, the researcher used a three-inch three-ring binder, with pocket dividers to store physical research data. Binder sections were designated for each participant within the study and structured with the following forms (in order):

- Informed Consent Form (Appendix E)
- Document Analysis Forms (when applicable) (Appendix A)
- Resume Replacement Form (Appendix B)
- Researchers Observation Forms (Appendix D)
- Virtual Communications
- Analytical Memos (Appendix H)
- Archival Form (Appendix G)

The researcher maintained two storing systems, a physical document system to store all handwritten and original documents collected during events, and a virtual system to store all transcribed, typed, and scanned documents. Any documents that were not generated electronically (i.e., those submitted by participant for document analysis) were scanned and

stored on researcher's hard drive. Audio-recorded interviews, interview notes, transcripts, field notes, submitted documents for analysis, and virtual record of written notes and observations were stored on the researcher's personal hard drive, which is password protected. Any documents that are not generated electronically (i.e., those submitted by participants for document analysis) were scanned and stored on the researcher's hard drive.

The researcher used two virtual filing methods. First, all participant data were stored collectively and virtually in folders labeled by data description (Audio Recorded Interviews; Submitted Tracks, Participant Note Forms; Transcripts; Fields Notes; Analytical Memos, Research Observation Forms; Data Analysis Forms; Virtual Correspondence; Document Analysis Forms; and Informed Consent Forms; etc.). The second method stored all data by folders labeled by participant convention method (i.e., A2), and within each participant folder was another group of folders labeled with the type of forms (see bulleted list above). All individual files were labeled by archival number (which combines the participant identification number, the full initials of the form name, and the date of data collection event). For example, if the researcher stored the Document Analysis Form (DAF) of the Resume (r) submitted by participant A2 on XX-XX-XX (date), this file was labeled A2DAFrXX-XX-XX.

Upon completion of the study, physical copies of audio recordings, interviews and observation documentations, and document analysis data were kept in a large, heavy-duty archival envelop with an archival information sheet attached (See Appendix G). These envelopes were stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home. All physical copies of documentation and virtual copies will be kept by the researcher for three years, upon which time they will be destroyed and deleted.

Coding. Data analysis and interpretation requires the researcher to make sense out of the data that was collected by grouping data into themes and using codes. Turner (2010) explained that “codes are consistent phrases, expressions, or ideas that were common among research participants” (p. 759) and serve as a symbolic assignment or representation for the data’s primary content and essence (Saldaña, 2009). Two coding cycles were employed for this research, beginning with first cycle coding where the researcher utilized elemental methods (structural coding and process coding) to analyze the data collected, followed by pattern coding which developed major themes within the data.

First cycle coding. Saldaña (2009) expanded on the procedures of using the two chosen elemental methods during first cycle coding: structural coding and process coding. “Structural coding applies a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 66). Other researchers (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Jonson, 2008) described structural coding as a strategy of labeling and indexing information so that researchers are able to access data quickly that is relevant to a specific analysis within a larger data set. For this study, the research questions specifically inquired about the individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that AA male musicians believe may impact career resilience and adaptability during the career development journey. As the study is theoretically framed with respect to career resilience and adaptability, the researcher intentionally highlighted and coded any instances of mentioning adversities faced and the career strategies used to approach or overcome adversity within the careers of AA male musicians. The researcher also employed an emic approach to determine these structural codes, which ensured that these codes were generated from “first-order concepts” (Creswell, 2008, p. 482) – local language, concepts, and ways of expression that are used by the members within a culture-

sharing group – as opposed to labels constructed by the researcher. Patton (2002) emphasized that an emic approach to coding keeps the “insider’s perspective” (p. 303) as the dominant source of generating “indigenous categories that the people interviewed have created to make sense of their world” (p. 454).

The other elemental method that was utilized during first cycle coding was process coding. This technique captured the process of human actions, connoting instances where observable activity is mentioned or taking place. This coding was applied to interview transcripts, field notes, and document analysis (if or when appropriate), as the researcher focused on the actual tactics, strategies, or routine actions that the AA male musicians engages in intentionally to enhance or impact their career. Codes generated to identify these action steps were useful in exploring themes of career behaviors related to factors of resilience and adaptability.

Second cycle coding. Saldaña (2009) stated that the goal during second cycle coding is to categorize and organize conceptual or theoretical themes that arise from the first cycle coding process. Once data was coded during the first cycle, the researcher applied pattern coding to describe major themes, patterns of actions, descriptions of interrelationships, or theoretical constructs of the data (Saldaña, 2009). Additionally, the codes yielded from first cycle structural coding served as a foundation for identifying other pattern codes and major themes that deserved attention and consideration when inquiring about career behaviors and transitions of AA male musicians.

Throughout the coding process, the researcher wrote analytical memos to document the choice of codes and explain certain concepts, thoughts, and conclusions that emerged from data analysis. Holton (2010) iterated that memo writing is a core stage of the data analysis process.

These memos are theoretical notes that make conceptual connections between categories that emerge in the data. To prepare for second cycle coding, the researcher generated analytical memos about the initial connections, relationships, reoccurring instances of words and phrases that may be evidenced across codes during first cycle coding. The researcher used these analytical memos to develop categories and themes to ultimately generate pattern codes. After validation from the participant, more analytical memos were generated to support the coding process of specific data sets. There were instances where analytic memos were coded based on inferences inserted by the researcher that were relevant to the analysis to draw conclusions about the data.

To practically apply coding techniques to this research, the researcher first designated italicized text that was not bolded to represent participant raw data and bolded text to represent researcher generated data to make a clear distinction between data that was connected to participant reality or perception and data that reflected the researcher's perceptions or observations. For coding, the researcher assigned each structural and process code a unique color (see Coding Flowchart in Appendix I) that was used for highlighting words or phrases during the transcription process. The researcher reviewed and color-coded these words or phrases that emerged in transcripts, handwritten notes, typed documents, and submitted documents where codes exist in the data. Highlighted words or phrases were marked on all the Analytical Transcripts in virtual files to reflect appropriate structural and process codes. After initial coding occurs, the researcher generated a Microsoft® Excel® workbook and copied copy and pasted codes on various spreadsheets. Using Microsoft® Excel® allowed the researcher to manipulate, categorize, and order codes regardless of data collection or entry priority. Different spreadsheets were used to categorize different codes, which in turn helped to generate pattern codes. The

Cycle 1 – Structural and Process Coding spreadsheet consisted of raw data coded on each Analytical Transcript. Each spreadsheet in the Cycle 1 Workbook was labeled by participant convention identification (i.e. B1), and the columns were labeled by the structural codes mentioned on the Coding Flowchart for each participant spreadsheet.

A second workbook (Cycle 2 – Preparing Pattern Codes) was created to separate all the raw data by structural and process coding so the researcher could analyze all raw data from each participant associated with the particular codes outlined in Cycle 1. Pattern codes were strategically notated only on analytical memos, specific spreadsheets in Microsoft® Excel ® and Microsoft® Word ® documents designated for specific pattern, not on raw or transcribed data forms. (The researcher maintained a running list of all emerging codes as a code key on the Coding Flowchart.) These Microsoft® Word® documents were used to generate more analytical memos highlighting patterns, explanations, and conclusions about specific career development steps and influential factors that impact the careers African American male musicians.

Interpretation. The data analysis procedures supported the researcher’s attempt to interpret data in at least four different ways. First, the researcher interpreted data that spoke to the principles of career resilience and adaptability, specifically reporting the action steps that participants mentioned or observed to be vital to survival, recovery, thriving, preparing, and taking initiative in career development (using pattern coded and process coded data) and those that the researcher observed and analyzed to be vital in the aforementioned areas. The second strategy for interpreting data identified any common themes about the individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors (using structural codes) that were shared among all participants in the study. A third interpretation strategy identified unique factors that were exclusively mentioned by each participant and not shared with any other musician in the study. The fourth interpretation

strategy identified any external supports, training, or education (using structural and process coding) that played a major role in shaping the career development of African American male musicians.

Rigor and Trustworthiness

There are two underlying principles pointed out by Krefting (1990) that describe qualitative research: 1) the basis of naturalistic inquiry is the fact that behavior is influenced by psychological, physical, and sociocultural environments, and 2) this behavior extends beyond what a researcher can capture and observe. Considering these two assumptions, it becomes necessary for the investigator to engage in and articulate subjective meaning and perception about the phenomena being study while establishing qualitative rigor for the study. Qualitative rigor in naturalistic research is most associated with the researcher's ability to adhere to specific philosophical perspectives and maintain thorough practices during data collection procedures (Richard G. Trefty Library, 2017). However, Patton (2002) simply referred to qualitative rigor as the quality of the actual observations that are made by the researcher, which is heavily dependent on how "factual" the observations are "rather than being distant from the phenomenon being studied" (p. 575). Reporting the "facts" in qualitative inquiry has to do with the rigor or trustworthiness of the study.

Trustworthiness is a term that simply means the quality of the researcher's ability to persuade readers that the research is worthy of attention and utility. As simple as this may seem, one must consider various elements of the research process to adhere to trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) made clear that trustworthiness applies to qualitative and quantitative research differently. Due to the differences in principles, practicalities, and procedures of the two research design methods, naturalistic inquiry cannot be addressed using conventional criteria that guide

quantitative research (internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity). Although this set of criteria is most consistently applied in scientific study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (1998) suggested an alternative set of criteria best suited for naturalistic research:

- Credibility: the truth value and confidence that the findings are true;
- Transferability: the ability to apply findings in other contexts; and
- Dependability – the likelihood that if study is repeated, findings would be consistent.

There were a few techniques that were employed in this study to ensure credibility, transferability, and dependability. The following paragraphs provide details about the qualitative rigor of the study and the researcher.

Credibility. As data was collected using multiple qualitative methods (data analysis and in-depth interviews), it was the goal of the researcher to employ triangulation of sources by analyzing multiple sources of information to address particular data points. Analyzing biographies and resumes that were submitted by the participant and cross-checking them with public documents that reference performances, event bills, cultural or historical instances is an example of the triangulation technique that was used in this study in order to present rich, robust, and well-developed data. Following the document analysis, the researcher recorded questions about missing information, gaps of employment, or areas within the biography that did not yield complete explanation. These questions were asked during the in-depth interviews, at which time the researcher requested references of confirmation through further analysis of public documents or viewings.

Another technique that was critical for establishing credibility, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is member checking. Patton (2002) posited that “having participants review the findings offers another approach to analytical triangulation” (p. 560). All participants in this

study were provided a transcript after in-depth interviews to encourage participants to give feedback on data that may have required further explanation or correction. This allowed for the participants in the study to assess the adequacy of the preliminary data and go on record with his validation of the preliminary findings of the study. No participant returned transcripts with feedback or proposed any changes.

Transferability. Researchers who conduct naturalistic studies are charged with the responsibility to establish the data base in such a way that readers are able to make transferability judgments (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This task is not to be confused with the notion that the researcher is to prove that results of the study can be applied to other contexts; instead, the goal is to construct the data in such a way that others (not the researcher) can determine how or if it can be applied in other contexts. To establish transferability in this study, the researcher conducted a method of purposeful, homogenous sampling by recruiting only those African American male musicians who were considered professional based on the researcher's criteria (see Appendix F for a list of criteria mentioned in the Sample Recruitment Email). Through the sampling size fifteen (15), sampling techniques, and the pragmatic research design, this researcher established transferability by unpacking dense, rich details of the context that impacts the raw data (the musicians' experiences), the data collection experience (the researcher's experiences), and the data analysis process (the development of data based on both sets of experiences). Merriam (1998) suggested this technique to supply rich, thick descriptions of the data, data collection events, details about setting, and any other information that would suffice so that readers are able to determine if there is a close match between their situation and the research situation. The narrative provided through a series of analytical memo writings recorded

after each data collection event, and the detailed accounts of context empowers readers to arrive at independent claims of applicability in other contexts and applications.

Dependability. Savin-Badin and Major (2013) described the element of dependability as the degree to which findings of a study will endure over the course of time, meaning that if the study is repeated, findings would be consistent. Considering that many qualitative studies employ methods that are tailored to the research situation, the notion of repeating a study based on methods alone does not suffice (Krefting, 1990). This researcher intended to provide dense descriptions within analytical memos about the utility and uniqueness of data collection methods in the study and through the use of the coding and color-coding process.

Researcher Subjectivity

Due to the participatory nature of the researcher's role in the data collection process of qualitative research, it is necessary to identify any personal values, assumptions, or biases at the outset of the study (Creswell, 2009). The researcher has professionally and informally served as an advisor, program coordinator, and creative practitioner, which has positioned her to attain knowledge and develop sensitivity and awareness to many of the challenges and complexities that accompany the journey of career development for creative professionals. In these roles, the researcher has developed trainings and programs that focus on industry standards, personal development, and artistic trends and traditions to design workshops and programs that enhance talent development, social engagement, and cultural enrichment of participants. Additionally, the researcher has intimate knowledge about the world of performing as a poet for over ten years.

The credibility of the researcher is just as important as technical rigor in a qualitative study (Patton, 2002) since the researcher is the instrument that will collect the data. How well prepared, knowledgeable, trained, and intellectually capable the researcher is to access,

extrapolate, and analyze data affects the credibility of the research. The key to establishing credibility is to report any information about the researcher's subjectivity, personal or professional experiences, or any factors controlled by the researcher that may impede on the data collection, analysis or interpretation process (Patton, 2002). Savin-Baden and Major (2013) addressed the misconception that researcher subjectivity should be reduced in qualitative researcher and argued that it is more appropriate to acknowledge researcher subjectivity rather than reduce it. Peshkin (1988) mentioned that the researcher's background knowledge, perspective, or biases can help to frame the researchers' reality at the point of collecting data and deserves consistent acknowledgement throughout the research project.

To put the advice of Patton (2002), Peshkin (1988), and Savin-Baden and Major (2013) to practice, the researcher intentionally reported the researcher subjectivity in her field notes written on Researcher Observation Forms after every data collection incident. Researcher subjectivity reflected information about: 1) the researcher's relationship with the musician (if known prior to study); 2) the researcher's level of familiarity with the setting in which data collection took place; 3) the researcher's wellbeing during the data collection process, and 4) any prior knowledge or experience with any experiences or data points that emerge throughout the study. This ensures that the researcher reflects a consciousness about her perspective throughout the research study (Patton, 2002). In addition to including researcher subjectivity in field notes, the researcher also employed a subjectivity audit that requires the researcher to write about herself (any thoughts, perceptions, connections, or prior experiences related to the participant(s), the setting(s), the content in the interview or observation, or the data collection experiences) before, during, and after data collection experiences to capture the researcher's frame of reference during each phase of the research project.

Ethical Considerations

Conducting qualitative research requires special consideration to ethical issues. Creswell (2009) explained that the researcher has an obligation to “respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants” (p. 198) in the study as the data collection process may potentially invade privacy of participants and reveal sensitive information that otherwise would not be shared. Thus, the researcher performed the following tasks to assure confidentiality and protect the rights of the participants in the study:

- Obtained approval from Institutional Review Board to conduct research study.
- Provided each participant with an Informed Consent Form (Appendix E) that articulates the purpose of the research, procedures of how research will be conducted, details about how data will be used, benefits to the study, rights and risks of participants, and contact information of researcher.
- Explained this information verbally before each interview and observation.
- Informed all participants of data collection devices.
- Obtained written consent from each participant prior to any interview or observation session.
- Utilized a pseudonym system during transcription to represent any participants, or persons, places, or things mentioned during interviews or observations that may reveal true identities.
- Made available verbatim transcripts, typed field notes, and written analytical memos to participants.
- Reported data with special consideration to the participants’ rights, interests, and needs.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the career development steps of AA male musicians by examining their perspectives of the individual, cultural and historical, and environmental factors that impact career resilience and adaptability. Using pragmatic qualitative methods, the researcher was able to collect, record, transcribe, code, and analyze data in such a way that rich, dense results are trustworthy and maintains integrity. The research design was guided by a set of ethical considerations and were facilitated and reported with respect to the participants' rights, needs, and values. The data interpretation and analysis process ultimately served as the key to accurately report the perspectives of AA male musicians and their beliefs about the factors that influence resilience and adaptable during their career development journey.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the career development steps of African American (AA) male musicians by examining their perspective of the individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that impact career resilience and adaptability. Career resilience refers to the choices that professionals make to learn, recover from, or submit to undesirable events or disruptions (Richardson, 2002) on the path of career development and advancement. The quality of career resilience can be evaluated by exploring career self-management behaviors that exhibit actions intended to assist them with the three stages (survival, recovery, and thriving) an individual may take during and after adverse circumstance (Ledesma, 2014). Career adaptability is concerned with the ability to face or initiate change to meet an individual's personal and professional needs. Employing adaptability strategies help individuals to prepare for possibilities that may arise on their career journey (Watson, 2013). Using individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors as conceptual filters as well as identifying the external support resources AA male musicians feel are imperative on their career development and advancement journey, this study identified the career habits, strategies, actions, and resources that support the following career resilience and career adaptability constructs: survival, initiative, recovery, preparation, and thriving.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to investigate musicians' personal experiences, adaptability strategies, and tools used to navigate adverse circumstances and situations in their professional and career development journeys. Guided by career construction theory as the theoretical framework, the interview questions were framed to collect information about the following elements:

- life structure (shaped by the constellation of work and other social roles that individuals adhere to in their world);
- strategies (coping mechanisms for dealing with developmental tasks, transitions, and change);
- stories or narratives that indicate motivational patterns and themes that define life; and
- style (individual characteristics or traits such as abilities, interest, and personal that form a self-concept).

Resumes, biographies, and pictures of awards were submitted by some of the musicians, which were reviewed to highlight the musicians' employment histories, career movement, and self-identified skills and resources the musician had acquired. This review generated additional questions that were asked during the interview for clarity and contextual understanding of the musicians' career activities. This chapter reports a description of the participants in the study and discusses findings of the research.

Descriptions of the Participants

The fifteen AA male musicians who participated in this study were all musicians who were consistently paid through or have previously performed for religious institutions located in the metropolitan area. None of the musicians were signed to a major music label, and each acted independently as a free agent. All participants have experience working with national or internationally acclaimed artists and generate more than half of their annual income through music career habits and activities. Table 1 provides a description of each participant's age, educational background, and the status of his career activity at the time of the study. Six

musicians generated 100% of their income through music-related activities; and nine musicians were simultaneously employed in other fields that required music skills to perform job tasks.

Table 1. Description of AA Male Musicians Participating in the Study

Participant	Age	Education	Full-Time Music	Outside Career
Willow	61	Completed bachelor's degree		X
Curry	42	Completed associate degree		X
Earnest	38	Completed master's degree		X
Graydon	36	Completed bachelor's degree		X
Richard	28	College experience		X
Millard	64	Completed master's degree	X	
Gabe	28	College experience	X	
Borus	26	Completed bachelor's degree		X
Victor	38	Completed bachelor's degree		X
Dorian	30	Completed master's degree	X	
Jackson	28	College experience		X
Latrell	28	Did not finish high school	X	
Ryan	30	Completed master's degree	X	
Max	33	Completed bachelor's degree		X
Hayward	29	College experience	X	

The participants in the study provided a range of background experiences. Willow is a lead guitar player who has been playing since before the age of 10. He grew up in a big city close to the Midwest during a musical era when funk, blues and gospel were popularized in mainstream music. Willow and his family often visited the main street where music happened, which was a segregated atmosphere. His parents supported his musical endeavors while he pursued college and engaged in other occupations to support his musical career. At the time of the interview, Willow was divorced and is a father of two adult daughters. He worked as a staff musician at a local mega church for sixteen years while also working full-time at a state agency.

Curry is a musician who plays piano or any instrument involving keys. He is a divorced father of three boys and has been a part of the local gospel music scene since his birth. His mother was a recording gospel artist who traveled across the United States to perform, and he accompanied her as her pianist. Curry has much entrepreneurship experience in the restaurant business, real estate, and music, starting a chain of recording studios that offered music lessons. A few of the other musicians in the study were taught and employed by Curry as a result of these studios. In addition to the businesses he owns, Curry has also served as minister of music at a local mega church for over twenty years.

Born and raised in a major music city in the Midwest, Earnest is a drummer who is the only member of his family who is musically inclined. He was raised in the church and has been able to establish fruitful relationships with major gospel and mainstream musicians through career experiences in the church. He is a single father of one son, and works in education, assisting students with preparing for college and workforce activities. In addition to performing music, Earnest is also a music producer and generates revenue through a music production business he established.

Graydon is an all-around musician with experience playing multiple instruments as well as conducting, orchestrating, arranging, and producing music. He was raised in a country town and grew up in the church. He was surrounded by musical influences in his family, but no one made a living from music. Graydon experienced financial hardships growing up, which he has used as motivation to establish multiple streams of income from investments to entrepreneurial endeavors. He has completed a solo debut album project and has experience producing Broadway shows. He owns a lighting company and served as minister of music at a mega church

at the time of the interview. He is a father to a young son and also mentors some of the other musicians in the study.

Richard is a keyboardist who started off playing and learning drums and was supported much by his father, who was also a musician. He was raised in the church in a small country town. Along with playing keyboard and piano, he sings. At the time of the study, he worked as the music director at a mega church and held a full-time job as an account analyst for a corporate organization. He has one teenage son who is also a musician.

Millard is a musician who is skilled at playing trumpet, brass instruments, and bass guitar. He grew up during a time of racial tension and segregation but was always able to progress through career experiences regardless of his ethnicity or racial adversity. His mother was the only one in the family who supported him attaining a music career. Much of his pursuit was self-funded and guided by a band director who was like a father. At the time of the study, Millard was a retired professor at a historically Black university and served more than twenty years in their music department. Although retired, Millard still participates in music career experiences and avails himself to write and arrange music upon request.

Gabe taught himself to play drums, guitar, keyboard, piano, organ, flute, and accordion. Although his father was a musician and exposed Gabe to many different instruments, Gabe spent much of his time teaching himself how to capitalize on his gifts. Gabe's music career progression involved many odd-end jobs working in retail. He performs for local bands and is also married to a musician. Growing up, his father pastored a church where he occasionally performs. Outside of performing music, he develops technology that can assist musicians with scheduling rehearsals and performances and managing their time.

Borus is a musician who plays mostly piano and organ but is also skilled with the tuba. Currently, he is committed to performing for churches. He did not grow up with any musical influences in his family but said that his parents and grandmother supported his pursuit. He did not start performing music until he was a teenager. Throughout his music career, he has worked for multiple churches as a staff musician. Although he attests that he makes considerable revenue from his music, he also works at a youth group home to supplement his income. He is married with no children.

Victor is a drummer who migrated to the South for college from a small country town in another Southern state. Growing up around older siblings who were in high school and college bands sparked an interest in music at a very young age. Initially, he attended a university to major in music but ended up with a degree in marketing with a minor in music percussion. Although talented in arranging choreography and despite touring with a major dance company to perform hip-hop shows, Victor formed a local band that has been successful at traveling across the state to perform. At the time of the study, Victor was looking to return to the church scene after taking time away from performing for churches when he got married. He has two children and currently works for a private company with a background in marketing.

There are three saxophonists in the study. One is Dorian, who serves as a professor at a university, teaching courses related to sound recording technology. Dorian moved to the South for college from a major city in the Midwest, where clientele and networks with other musicians were initially established. His father was a well-known DJ and helped to ignite his interest in music as a profession. Upon completing his Master's, Dorian returned to his alma mater as a professor. At the time of the study, Dorian was working on his debut album and continuing to perform locally.

Another saxophonist is Jackson, who has lived in the area where this study took place all his life. Jackson grew up in a religious household and experienced many traumatic experiences growing up such as death, gun violence, and poverty. He was presented with touring offers at the age of sixteen, but his parents did not allow him to work on tour to keep him from a lifestyle of promiscuity, substance abuse, and underage drinking. Jackson is now married and has two children. At the time of the study, Jackson worked as a salesman and has had many other career experiences outside of music. Despite experiencing adversity with local venue owners and promoters, Jackson uses social media to share his music and find opportunities to perform. He no longer plays for churches since cultivating his views and commitment to spirituality.

Latrell began his relationship with a guitar before birth. Two maternal generations of guitarists have passed down the gift and talent of music. His mother (guitarist) and father (singer) toured throughout the gospel circuit across the United States. Latrell has spent all of his life touring. He is the only musician in the study who has not completed high school and can't read music yet still has achieved a high level of success. At the time of the interview, Latrell admitted to focusing more on his artistry as opposed to touring and accompanying other artists. He was working on the release of his second solo album. Latrell is married and has young children.

Ryan is a trumpet player who grew up in the area and has well-known family members who are musicians in the community. He started playing only to earn credits in high school and later cultivated a desire to become a band director. He currently serves as band director for a local middle school and has participated in many ensembles and solo performances. He is skillful in playing classical music and has had progressive career experiences from providing music lessons to teaching at band camps and facilitating instruction at high schools to serving as band

director. Ryan is married with two young children and occasionally provides mentorship to young community members.

Max is a saxophonist who had access to instruments and learning opportunities as a result of his father serving as band director at a few local schools over the years. Max pursued a music degree in college, and while attending college, worked in retail to fund his college experience. After graduating, he landed a job working in education but not in relation to music. From the researcher's knowledge, Max has put out an album and is consistently performing locally.

Hayward is another musician who plays multiple instruments – drums, organ, keyboard, bass guitar, and saxophone. He was raised in a home with several musically inclined family members. His performances and career experiences have mostly been in church with gospel music. At the time of the interview, Hayward was employed by three different churches in the area. In addition, Hayward also maintained part-time employment through a medical agency. Hayward was working on a solo project that is scheduled to be released the following year.

During the interview each participant displayed a pleasant and positive attitude toward the experience. The use of slang, communication style, body language, and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, laughter, or silence indicated that the participants were comfortable, engaged, and relaxed. Prior to this study, the researcher knew six of the musicians through attending church services, live entertainment events, or academic activities in the local area. This familiarity established a natural flow of conversation during the interview. After each interview there were some comments when the musician expressed appreciation for this study, requested that specific experiences mentioned in the interview be omitted from the transcript, or discussed mutual or similar endeavors with the researcher. Although some interviews were interrupted by

phone calls and text messages, all participants remained engaged and involved in the interview by silencing their phones or not attending to the notifications.

Research Findings

Guided by the conceptual framework for the study, the researcher yielded to the tenets of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory by exploring aspects of the musician and his environment in order to understand what factors influence career development and advancement. The data analysis process began with determining appropriate etic codes that served as the initial parameters for exploring information within the following themes:

- 1) Individual factors that provide insight into who the participants are;
- 2) Interpersonal factors that indicate influential relationships or experiences the musicians have had with significant people;
- 3) Sociocultural factors that add context to the environmental experiences or circumstances surrounding the musician's development and career movement; and
- 4) Career survival self-management strategies, and external resources musicians believe were important to succeed in the music business.

Each theme yielded sub categories of emic and etic codes that were offered by the musician or generated by the researcher to explain the trends, traits, or experiences of the musicians.

The first theme revealed that the musicians believed their morality and their treatment of people impacts career development and advancement. Trustworthiness, dependability, loyalty, genuineness, honesty, love, passion, and ambition were all emic codes generated by musicians' responses that described important personal characteristics that one must have to be a successful musician. Other important factors that were revealed in Theme 1 described the musicians' views about the importance of spiritual giftedness, the role of spirituality, and their responsibility as

musicians to carry on music. Musicians revealed their source of motivation, which provided understanding of what fueled career decisions and behaviors. Etic codes were established by the researcher to categorize the significant events that the musicians said uniquely impacted their careers. The most important of these were accomplishments, career mobility, unique experiences, performance opportunities, and social capital. The most prevalent adversities experienced by the musicians were related to compensation and the lack of regard for musicianship as a profession.

Theme 2 revealed interpersonal factors that are detrimental to the viability of a musician's career. Relationships with family members who were involved in or supported music activities, other musicians, and mentors were the influential relationships that musicians believed are most important because they provide support, opportunities to build skill and competence, and connections to performances and career experiences. Theme 3 identified sociocultural factors that elicited emic codes about the musician's early experiences with music and the church as well as local music industry culture that governs where and how business is done in their careers. Theme 4 revealed emic codes that described action steps and career self-management behaviors that musicians employ to survive, initiate, recover, prepare, and thrive. The remainder of this chapter gives a detailed account of data collected in each theme.

Theme 1: Individual Factors

Data gathered during the interviews and document analysis uncovered individual factors related to personal qualities or characteristics, significant experiences and adverse events impacting the musician's career journey, and the role of spirituality in his career. There were commonalities among all sub-categories that showed similarities in the musicians' personal and professional experiences or thoughts about what qualities were important in developing or

advancing in the music industry. Additionally, there were a few unique experiences, thoughts, or feelings that have shaped the musician's personal mindset about his character.

Category 1: Personal qualities or characteristics. Characteristics that describe a musician's moral fabric and ability to connect with people and musical giftedness are among some of the major personal qualities that influence career development and advancement for AA male musicians. These qualities reflect personal attributes that take initiative to develop or display.

Moral fabric and ability to connect with others. All the musicians unanimously claimed that mobility in the music profession relies heavily on the relationships that are formed with people in the profession, potential mentors, and fellow band members. In order to establish and maintain these relationships, a musician must have a likeable personality. Ryan referenced "being likeable" at least three times throughout the interview, saying, "You're not going to get heard if you're a jerk and you're rude." Millard believed his personable skills and "the way you treat people, the way you come off to people" helps in the music profession. When asked about unique characteristics that impacted his career development, Curry said that it is his ability to connect with people, which is a rare and unique characteristic in this industry as the perception is that musicians "don't fool with people too much."

Other personal traits that were important in sustaining healthy relationships have to do with trustworthiness and dependability. Often in music, musicians rely on one another to substitute, make recommendations, or provide referrals for performances and opportunities that may arise. When making these recommendations or decisions for substitutions, musicians risk their own reputation when trusting another musician to represent them. Several musicians mentioned that they value fellow musicians who can be trusted to not only learn the music but

also attend the rehearsals and performances on time with the necessary equipment and their instruments ready. Borus said that these qualities are hard to come by.

Earnest, who was mentioned by several other musicians as a great drummer, mentor, bandmate, and friend, said that his loyalty, compassion, and unique musical ability to connect with anyone in and outside of music has helped to create memorable and significant experiences for him. Musicians must also carry a sense of love, passion, or ambition to refuel positive career attitudes and reassert the commitment they have made to music. Latrell explained love is the basis of his motivation. Regarding passion, Ryan defined success as “being able to sustain yourself with your passion.” Graydon said that it is passion that will allow him to “do this on the street corner.” Love and passion for the craft and for the people supporting the craft are personal qualities that deserve mentioning when exploring individual factors.

Musical giftedness. The musicians expressed the importance and value of their giftedness in music, admitting that this gift is a part of his identity, self-awareness, or responsibility as a musician. Willow said that the reason he had support in his early years is that “[family] knows it’s a part of who I am” while Richard said honing the gift means to “[learn] who you are as a musician.” The process of discovering self-identity through giftedness is what helped Richard become comfortable with who he was as a musician and developed a sense of confidence to say “I don’t play like everyone” when he sits behind the keys. Millard offered to AA male musicians that if being a musician is who they are, they must consider the cultural barriers that have been established as a result of their physical identity and invest time and effort in necessary strategies that yield persistence in practicing and developing strong work ethic and determination. He believed that AA musicians must “study harder than everybody else.”

Self-awareness is also a tenet in establishing career identity with respect to the importance of understanding giftedness and utilizing it. One strategy that is important to note is the way Gabe employed a self-awareness assessment of his identity as a musician while engaging in career decision making, saying, “I never take a job without [asking]: What do I want to be? Where do I want to go? How does this line up with what I’m trying to do with my life?” He later said, “Music is my gift, not a hobby,” which suggests that he is aware of this gift and respects it as something more than just a tool for recreation when making career decisions. Self-awareness has also led Hayward to discover when it is best for him to create. He realized that his creativity blossoms the most at night as he works on mastering four different instruments.

A musician’s responsibility. The gift of being a musician requires a certain awareness of his responsibility to music, which according to Richard is to leave the legacy of music to the next generation or “pass the torch,” according to Victor. Ryan provided a brief history lesson of the influence of music on AA culture over time, saying that music is deeply rooted in the heritage of African tribal culture and can be seen in ceremonies of celebration, codes of communicating with each other and with the spirit, and tactics to maintain structure and rhythm while working.

Given that music has been a longstanding pillar in the AA community, musicians have the responsibility of stewardship over their gift to keep music thriving in the culture. There was consensus among the musicians that the current state of music compromises the legacy of musicianship due to the evasion of technology (Curry), the lack of appreciation for the music that came before current-day rap and R&B (Millard), and the influence of capitalism that ultimately encourages lyrics to be “not as adept...not really as astute,” as Richard said. He continued to make the point, “If you sing about fast cars, women and drugs, you can make a record. And I think because of the nature of our society and capitalism, we’ve lost sight of making music that

fulfills your heart's desires." It is this reality that has both Victor and Graydon believing that music is a dying art, and musicians are responsible for mentoring the next generation of musicians. In response to the notion that music is a dying art form, Richard recognized his own responsibility toward music by saying this:

My job as an AA who's very proud of his heritage is to create other means and pour myself into others so that when I die there is several recreations and reincarnations of myself to give this information away.

The responsibility of musicians is not bound by the limitations of one culture; in fact, musicians are a part of making the world a better place. As cliché as this may sound, Willow emphasized that music is "very important and vital in our society." It is the vehicle that connects people who may not otherwise have any interest or desire to connect. Latrell addressed the topic of racism by saying his giftedness and ability to connect with people through music have the power to reverse hatred. The power to transcend cultural barriers speaks to Richard and Ryan's philosophy that music is a universal language, and with the ability to change feelings and moods, there is also a responsibility to change lives.

Considering that a musician's responsibility is to human society or, specifically for AA musicians, to the musical legacy of African heritage, there is a unique and personal responsibility that musicians have to themselves to engage in self-efficacy thoughts and behaviors, invest in their gift, and take pride in their power to change things. Richard spoke on the importance of being confident and gifted: "It's one thing to be gifted, but it's another thing to be confident and gifted, because sometimes we run the risk of getting around musicians who know that they are the [business] and we become intimidated and won't rise to the occasion." When giving advice to aspiring musicians, every participant said that musicians must invest in strengthening their musicality and skill to survive. Graydon suggested that "music changes every six months; there's

always new technologies, new processes,” and in order to stay prepared, musicians must study music, listen to different genres, and develop high levels of work ethic and discipline when practicing. These tasks are part of the musician’s responsibility toward music.

To survive and thrive in the music industry, personal qualities and characteristics are necessary. Musicians must possess a moral fabric that deems them capable of connecting and cooperating with people since success is highly dependent upon maintaining fruitful relationships. Whatever the motivation behind the pursuit to become a professional, be it intrinsic, social, or financial, one thing that remains paramount is the musician’s awareness of his musical giftedness and his responsibility to music to carry on the legacy. It is because music operates in a powerful way, changing lives, moods, and feelings, that musicians must yield to, nurture, and respect their gifts.

Category 2: Significant experiences and adversity. Musicians in this study indicated personal and professional experiences that positively undergirded their careers. These significant experiences were categorized in four etic codes: accomplishments, career mobility and experiences, performance opportunities, and connections or social capital. There were also events throughout the musicians’ careers that presented adversity. Exploring these events shed light on musicians’ resilience and ability to recover and adapt.

Accomplishments. When asked about career experiences, some of the notable highlights mentioned had much to do with what the musicians were able to accomplish. Leadership positions and memberships in different ensembles were highlighted on musicians’ resumes under achievement, noting that these accomplishments were worthy to point out as a part of the musician’s career process. Ryan’s resume was impressive to the researcher in that it displayed a progressive work history, starting from being a trumpet and horn instructor to his current

position of director over bands. Additionally, Ryan's resume demonstrated that he was a recipient of three grant awards, scholarship awards and recognition awards as "Most Outstanding Music Major" and "Honorable Mention as an Outstanding Intern." He was also granted membership into eleven professional bands and ensembles across the state.

Willow mentioned being awarded for outstanding musicianship and recognized by a national jazz organization early on in his career. Millard was another musician who had some historical accomplishments; being the first AA trumpet player in a statewide symphony. Aside from receiving an Outstanding Award for Service Above and Beyond the Call of Duty, a Life Achievement Award, and another award recognizing years of trumpet solo performances, a City Proclamation presented by the Mayor recognized April 15th as [Millard] Day, and public recognition from the state's House of Representatives on the occasion of his retirement.

Leadership positions and competitions were also significant accomplishments described in the interviews. Jackson's music resume mentioned, "I made All Region every year I tried out. I made All-State in Jazz." Max said that in his early experiences he made All Region, All Band, and All Region Jazz Band his first time trying. Victor mentioned on his resume that he held a leadership position in his college band as a drum major, as did Earnest. When talking about that experience in the interview, Earnest mentioned that being drum major reaffirmed his leadership skills.

Career mobility and experiences. Career experiences and mobility were also referenced as significant events. After addressing the reason behind a seven-month employment gap on his resume, Graydon explained an incident that prompted his career move from Church A to Church B. During his time at Church A, he was accused of having an altercation with another musician. Without proper investigation, Graydon was terminated. However, two days later, he was hired as

a staff musician at Church B. He later became minister of music. This career experience was important to him because of previous financial hardships. He described a time when he sought help from God to rescue him from financial trouble, making a promise to not ever allow himself to get back to that space. Having secured employment only two days after termination allowed him to dodge the potential financial hardships that may have resulted from unemployment.

Another musician spoke about a career transition that was significant. When deciding to take a severance package instead of vying for another position in a corporate job, Earnest said that this decision helped to free him up so he could focus on music while not having to worry about money. The balance of working in a corporate job and in music simultaneously was stressful, which was significant because he experienced many financial hardships on his career development journey.

Performance opportunities. Many of the musicians mentioned major performances that were significant events in their careers. Curry recalled playing at the White House Christmas Party for President Barack Obama proudly stating that he was the only musician that accompanied the choir who sang at this event. Similarly, Max discussed his opportunity to perform at the historical home of former president Bill Clinton. “I felt like that was an honor in and of itself; but more importantly, I was an African American doing that. I took pride in that.” Willow mentioned he performed on the same bill as Muddy Waters.

Dorian said that his career began with one performance behind a famous artist. He was heard by someone who invited him to another event, where he met someone who had his own venue. Victor listed many performances behind national and international artists on his resume. Jackson also made known on his resume the many major performances that were significant in his career.

The significant events that musicians faced were told through their accomplishments, career mobility and experiences, and highlighted performances. These experiences played a role in building confidence, opportunity, and reputation and are worthy of consideration when discovering how musicians have thrived in their careers.

Social capital and connectedness. Another category of significant events that helped to shape career development and advancement deals with the relationships, connections, and networks established by the musicians as well as with social capital. Throughout the interviews, musicians repeatedly mentioned that relationships were key components to success. Considering this, many musicians mentioned times when fruitful relationships were established. In music, simply being a part of the right band and having relationships with fellow musicians are significant.

Max was able to meet Quincy Jones through his mentor and college professor, who has since passed away. This experience was significant not only because he was able to meet Quincy Jones but also because he was able to witness the relationship between his mentor and Quincy and the reach his mentor had with many well-respected artists was significant. He mentioned that it is something that he would never forget – seeing how people would fly from across the world to come to “[my state], the little old town in [my state], just to see [my mentor]. That's the effect he has on [others] - his legacy.”

Gabe referenced a relationship that he has maintained over the course of his career with an accomplished guitarist who ended up buying Gabe his first guitar. Gabe praised this friend because despite being the brother of a legendary artist, he has paved his own way in music and has been a source of inspiration to Gabe throughout his career. There were also fruitful

connections that have been made between musicians in the study that are worthy to mention. For instances, Richard said this:

And I probably would be really remiss if I didn't mention EARNEST's name. He really did come into my life at a time where I was really becoming hungry again for the road and wanting to understand what the musicians of the road were doing. But I also needed the push from somebody who was respected in the industry to validate what it is that I brought to the table. The fact that he trusted my dopeness and what I brought to the table and took me out on the road at a time where that type of mentorship is not and has not been popular, I am forever indebted to him for that.

In another instant, Victor referenced Earnest as one of his best friends, a college roommate, and fellow drum major/band member. Earnest was someone who often gave him advice about career decisions. One predicament where Victor asked Earnest for advice was significant because it influenced how he conducted business as a musician. In instances where a musician is not able to establish a relationship with someone, it is still seen as significant if one is able to contact or learn from a respected artist or musician in the field. Being able to meet Victor Wooten was a highlight that Jackson said is significant.

Having social capital is an asset in the music industry. Earnest mentioned that he acquired artist-level and educator-level endorsements with three major music companies and explained that these endorsements are not easy to obtain. One of the things that these companies look for when choosing whom to endorse is the musician's reach and ability to get his product in front of as many people as possible. Although Earnest was modest in admitting his reach, Victor mentioned that Earnest has the advantage of being able to connect with and learn from great musicians from his hometown. Earnest was fortunate to have grown up in a music-rich city in the Midwest where he attended and played for a church that nurtured his spiritual development. It was there where he gained connections and "favor" with pastors, musicians, friends, and mentors who are professionals in the mainstream gospel and R&B music industry.

Adversity. The musicians in this study reminisced about experiences in their careers that presented adversity. From illnesses to unsupportive relationships with family members to divorce and car accidents, the musicians shared significant challenges that caused stress and hardship. Issues with compensation will be discussed in Theme 3: Sociocultural Factors. Work conditions in church settings were etic codes noted under adversity.

Musicians are often expected to perform under unreasonable work conditions that could be life threatening. Latrell experienced quite a challenge when getting hired by a mega-church. His experience was nothing short of unique. Latrell described the hardship when transitioning to work for this church:

When I first started there, they were like, “Well, we gone bring you in one week just to see how the church like you and see how things go.” So, they brought me in that week. After that week, they were like, “Ok, so we want you to stay for next week.” So, I stayed for that week, then it just never stopped. I never got a chance to really [transition]. So, I’m spending \$700-\$800 easy at the Hilton for that week. Or drive back every day...For the first four months, I’d drove back every day. I did that from June to February. Knowing the songs and playing the music, that ain’t the part that was hard. It was managing the 5-hour drive back [home] just to get there to start music, just to drive back Tuesday to do that. That was the hardest thing to me.

Latrell said that this experience led him to develop kidney stones, and his doctor instructed him to rest and allow his body to heal.

Although these may be drastic work conditions, Hayward offered another nuance related to conditions that many church musicians have to deal with when traveling with their home church to perform at special functions or other venues. He said that musicians must possess adaptability:

And then as far as adaptability...you go to a church, and you ask them, “Hey, what do I need to bring?” And they say, “Nothing! We got everything.” And they got a first stack drum set. Toms busted, cymbals gone, and you playing on a Casio keyboard, you know, with three keys missing. So, you really, really have to be able to still give a quality performance with whatever’s there.

Working for the church requires that musicians have patience, compassion for people to withstand some of the scrutiny, and adaptability in order to deliver a high level of musicianship given the conditions of the church and instruments provided.

Another adverse circumstance that many of the musicians in the study faced deals with the challenge of balance. It is not uncommon for musicians to engage in additional employment activities outside of music. In fact, nine of the musicians were committed to full-time employment in other fields while six of the musicians either have structured employment that involves music or are retired and still participate in music activities. Most of the full-time employment occurs in the daytime while many of the musicians perform at night. These night opportunities often compete with personal responsibilities like spending time with family, romantic relationships, or personal time. Both Willow and Curry spoke about the hardship of missing out on family experiences. Willow has two daughters who were involved in dance activities and was often not able to attend recitals. Curry mentioned that because he traveled to play keys behind his mother who was an accomplished gospel singer, he missed most of his college experience. In the same vein, Graydon said that working for the church, “You’re always working. There are no days off. So, I don’t have much of a personal life. I spend 98% of time alone.” Loneliness is something that is common among the musicians as Earnest, Graydon, and Richard all mentioned that there are times when they felt alone but had to learn how to find a healthy balance between work responsibilities and attending to personal needs.

The final adversity that seemed common among the musicians is the lack of cohesiveness in the local music community. It must be mentioned that this observation may be different in other cities where musicians thrive; however, in the local community, Max believed, “Nobody wants to work together because everybody wants to be the man.” In discussing the lack of

cohesiveness, ego was a recurring word that musicians believed hindered progress among band members. Jackson said, “Every big band I joined that should have blown up, just failed...egos.”

Richard shared his views on the nature of the disconnect between local musicians, saying that they have so much pride. He offered more on this point:

Instead of celebrating [gifted musicians], we find ways to pull them down. When it looks like they are gathering too much steam, then we find ways to release them. It's always in the worse ways. It maybe through the mode of talking about them and killing their reputation, or it could be outright neglect and dismissing yourself from them, because they genuinely may have something that you don't.

In other instances, cohesiveness is important when it comes to the trust that musicians need to have in one another, but Borus said that trusting other musicians is another challenge. It is common for musicians to serve as music directors for a project and be responsible for choosing band members to form a unit for a performance. Earnest talked about the challenge of trusting a musician to be punctual for rehearsals and show adequate work ethic to deliver an acceptable performance. The issue with trust can also be seen in the event when “low-balling” occurs; that is when a musician negotiates a lower rate with a venue that may have previously paid another musician's quoted rate for service. Low-balling can potentially reduce opportunities for musicians who set standard rates based on their worth or what is required for the job. Graydon mentioned that he sets a high bar for himself as a standard of performance, which is why he would not perform for less than his standard rate. He explained his frustration with low-balling below:

I hate the way we do, we lowball each other. Somebody else will do it for \$75 or \$100, and [the venue will] take it. And they'll say, ‘Well, I have to pay Graydon \$300 to do a show,’ and [the musician] will say “Well, I'll do it for \$100.” And so, they'll give them a job. You have that issue here a lot.

Dealing with adversity as a result of working for the church, facing hardships due to lack of compensation, facing difficulty with maintaining a healthy balance, and experiencing the lack

of cohesion in the local music community are all examples of why Ryan may believe that “it’s so easy to get downtrodden with all the stress of being a musician.” This statement justifies why exploring adversity that musicians face provides contextual references to the personal qualities or characteristics musicians must have to survive, initiate, recover, prepare, and thrive in the music industry.

Category 3: The role of spirituality in a musician’s career. Gaining access to musicians through a religious institution was an intentional approach to connect with AA male musicians who may have feedback about the role of spirituality in a musician’s career. At the time of the study, eight musicians who participated in the study were currently employed by a religious institution. The other seven musicians had experience working in religious settings. Every musician in the study responded that spirituality was important and explained how and why spirituality played a role in his career to some degree.

The definition of spirituality is subjective. When asked to explain how important spirituality is in his career, Graydon responded, “It depends on what your definition of spirituality because I won’t say that church itself is going to help you.” His response suggested that he sees church and spirituality as separate entities, and although he works for a religious institution, that had no bearing on feeding his spirituality. Rather, it is “faith” in God that is a more appropriate component to describe what is necessary on his journey. He gave advice to not rely on church to feed spirituality but to regard spirituality as having faith in a higher power:

You got to keep the faith that you can do it. You got to believe in yourself. Know that God does not give you gifts for them to waste away in a church in the backwoods. You have to push your own self up [until] you believe that God is going to put you on a platform where you can be seen and exposed. But you have to do that personally.

There are two things in this statement that relate to the comments of other musicians: 1) God gives gifts, and 2) God is going to put you on a platform.

The difference between the role of spirituality and spiritual connectedness is that the role of spirituality deals with the reliance on a higher power to establish and manage circumstances and career experiences beyond the musician's control. Spiritual connectedness refers to a musician's ability to musically align with the spirits of others to communicate without verbal or nonverbal cues during performances in order to elicit a response. Musicians spoke about ways that spiritual connectedness assists them with their musical abilities. Dorian offered, "Music is a spiritual exchange of energy." Church musicians who understand this exchange have an advantage when they are sensitive to the spirit. Based on the feedback from musicians, the term "sensitivity" in this sense refers to the musician's ability to flow musically with the performing artist and other band members. The ability to be sensitive can awaken the spiritual energy between the musicians, the performing artist, and the audience. Hayward referred to this process as "being in tune," and when employed during the musical experience, the performing artist and musicians begin to communicate in the spiritual realm, moving the music in certain directions with synergy without directly talking to one another. Hayward added clarity by saying:

Being able to be in tune with a person, it really can kind of get spiritual. I feel where you're going. You don't have to tell me, I feel you. We didn't discuss where we're going, but the mood that we created, I'm here with you.

Hayward admitted that he has been offered performing opportunities because of his gift to effectively operate in the spirit during musical performances.

The role of spirituality is different from spiritual connectedness in that the musicians referenced spirituality as a relationship with a higher power they depend on to manage career movement. For example, Latrell attributed his career success to God's direction and provision.

He began a career that would put him in positions to where he could only credit God. Although he dropped out of high school, experienced traumatic situations as a child, started a family very early in his life, and has dealt with extreme health issues, Latrell has managed to build a reputation as one of the best musicians in the local area. Playing for national artists, producing his own projects, touring with international gospel groups, and being hired almost immediately to play for an internationally known mega church is not what makes this musician's story unique – it is the fact that he cannot read music and has never really taken an intense approach to career development. “I never had to get taught or try to figure out which way to go in my career. Everything just kind of always happened.” He has never learned music theory, which almost every musician participating in the study claimed is a part of surviving the industry. Instead, his survival and success has been built from “the gift God [gave] me” of playing by ear and adapting to the music.

Seven of the musicians admitted that their gifts came from God, giving reverence to God for creating in them something that has defined their lives since the beginning of time. Millard said, “I think it was just a gift from God that was in me from the time I hit this earth.” This statement suggested that being a musician, having the gift of musicianship, and carrying out career tasks and experiences are all ordained by God. In other words, becoming a musician was part of a greater plan. Ryan made the connection between longevity in the business and spiritual connectedness:

Some people say the universe, some people say God. Whatever it is to that person - some people say Jah. Whatever it is for that person, they're going to find longevity in what they do, because there's a greater meaning for what they do.

This statement was supported by Willow and Victor who emphasized the importance of having a relationship with God. These musicians purported that this relationship is the basis for providing direction, opportunities, and support in a musician's career.

The study revealed that direction in a musician's life can be defined by the goals set by musicians or the decision to embark on specific career experiences. After touring for 28 years, Latrell knew there was something else for him to do. He shared career goals of producing Grammy award winning work, beginning music therapy sessions, possibly creating a school, and watching his students from the school accept Grammy awards. He then mentioned, "God is shifting me in that direction to have those types of goals. So, I know I [am not] wasting time." As a result of this shift, Latrell has put more time and effort in himself as an artist and producer as opposed to allocating all his gifts and resources toward career experiences as a musician who only accompanies other artists. Latrell indicated that God's direction is for him to conquer more even though performing behind other artists may be a part of his path to draw income.

When asked how performance opportunities came about, Curry, Earnest, and Victor all said that they were positioned "at the right place, at the right time" and in some instances meeting the "right people," indicating that all things aligned in a way that was beyond the control of the musician and under the orchestration of God. As gifted as he may be, Gabe admitted that being human means that he has many limitations. He said that spirituality is important "because you'll soon realize that there are things you as a human are not capable of without assistance." He went on to say that opportunities sometimes occur outside of what he can do physically, and he's been fortunate to not have to ask for opportunities – they come to him. Gabe believed this is all God's doing.

Support comes in all forms and fashions in a musician's career. Some musicians identified support in the form of encouragement that may come from family members. Jackson believed that support is evaluated by the number of people who attend events, share posts, or take time to engage with a musicians' product; however, support in the spiritual sense is a bit more complicated to evaluate. Gabe said, "Support. That's a spiritual one there...God has stepped in for me when it came to support because, like I said, music was my support." Dealing with some emotional struggles and the absence of a supportive mother is what led Gabe to find comfort and support in music. One of the adversities that Graydon openly shared was his time of going through financial hardship. He stated that he prayed to God to rescue him from being broke. As Graydon indicated, the kind of support he needed was financial redemption. His request to God was not just for a certain amount of money; rather, it was for God to rescue him, and in return he said, "If you get me out this thing, I probably won't ever let myself get back to that." Since then, Graydon has not only secured employment to cover his expenses but has generated several streams of income from entrepreneurial and investment efforts. As an added bonus, Graydon said that his financial struggles have helped him to build character, an individual trait that he believes is necessary to possess on the career journey of a musician.

Although Hayward said that spirituality comes second to skill in his career, he feels it is still evident that spirituality is important to some degree on the journey to success for a musician. Jackson claimed that becoming a musician is a spiritual process, and Richard said that spirituality is "completely my lifeline." The interviews concluded that to ensure survival in this industry, there is reliance on a higher source to provide direction, orchestrate opportunities, and serve as support during adversity or in times when musicians experience their own limitations. The presence of spirituality has fostered a sense of character as told by Graydon and "holds you

at a high standard,” said Millard. “Accountability” is how Curry described this standard that he followed as a result of his spirituality. With spirituality being a vital part of the musicians’ lives, it was a necessary element to explore in the discussion of individual factors that impact a musician’s career development and advancement process.

Theme 2: Interpersonal Factors

“You never know how God has everything linked up, so relationships [are] important,” explained Latrell as to why musicians must be humble. Musicians provided details about the important interpersonal relationships that influence who they are and who they have become as professional musicians. There were four emic codes that categorized important relationships that were highlighted throughout the interviews. These were family influences, mentoring relationships, musicians’ peer relationships, and personal relationships.

Category 1: Family Influences. The role of family is paramount to establishing emotional security and initial support early in the lives of the musicians. According to Richard, musicians are extremely emotional. In fact, “Musicians are at the top of the food chain when it comes to emotions...We are the emotional hub of the world.” Being comfortable with the weight of that responsibility starts at home by parents investing in the giftedness of a musician. Victor believed that parents play a major role in supporting a musician’s gift through encouragement or paying for music lessons. He stated, “The first support to a musician starts at home. This means that parents see the gift, hone the gift...” Millard said that his family supported him early on because they know “it’s a part of who I am,” and they gave him encouragement to pursue a profession in music.

For many of the musicians, it was the influence of their family members who were already in the music profession that helped to shape their desire to become musicians. The most

prevalent example of this is the career experience of Latrell, who was born into music. Three generations in his family played guitar, traveled as a family in a gospel group, and performed across the nation. He said that he did not ask to be a musician, “it just happened” as if he didn’t have a choice because his family laid the path for him to continue the family’s legacy. Curry shared that same sentiment when expressing how he had to accompany his mother on keys as she traveled as an artist. He mentioned that he missed out on a lot of his childhood and college experiences because he was obligated to play for her. Richard said that his father was an inspiration because he played an instrument and supported his efforts to become a musician by buying him his first toy piano. Max admires his father for the influences that he had on him. In addition to exposing him to many instruments and providing access to learning opportunities, Max’s father had established relationships in the industry that Max could rely on in his career. Hayward also grew up in a family that was involved in the gospel music industry. He stated:

Started off because my family is musical. My mom, she plays drums, she plays keys, and she sings. My dad does the same: plays drum, organ and keys, and he sings. Both of them are recording artists. My dad actually is playing again now for a church, and he’s recently released a song this past year. So, as a result of that, I picked up the same.”

Similarly, Gabe provided details about how his father was a musical influence: “My dad handed me a guitar when I was 6.” Dorian credited his father for exposing him to musical experiences, as he was a DJ who also sang in a gospel group. He attended DJ sessions with him, helped him set up his equipment, and was allowed to push buttons to discover how technology worked with the DJ equipment.

Not all the musicians had family members who were supportive or were professionals in the industry. Millard talked about how his father believed that pursuing a career in music was “frivolous” and was not considered a real career. It was because of this that he and his mother

had to pay for his instruments because his father did not support his pursuit in music. However, he credits his mother for supporting him in his early years. Ryan also credited his mother as a source of encouragement: “My mother really pushed me to not quit. So, she was the biggest influence, anything I needed.” Graydon also experienced a similar challenge. Although his father played the piano and watched him take piano lessons, his father’s primary job was at a factory. He said, “My father was a factor worker. So, he thinks that you have to have blistered hands and sweaty brows to have a job. My uncle was the same way. All worked really hard.” Although many of his family members actively participated in music activities, “They don’t do it for a living. That’s the difference.” Earnest experienced a similar upbringing as he is the only one in his immediate family who plays an instrument. However, it was his mother who kept him in a church setting that connected him to musical influences.

Early experiences provide foundational context as to how the musicians shaped their views and perceptions around music. Although these experiences vary, they have a common thread of family influences in some form or another.

Category 2: Mentoring relationships. Mentorship was cited as a very important interpersonal factor in the career of a musician. All of the musicians referenced someone who mentored them throughout their journey, whether a band director, an accomplished musician, or a professor. Millard praised a band director who was like a father to him. To be Millard’s “overseer,” this band director offered Millard performance opportunities in local venues and bars but made sure he was present so that Millard would not be influenced to engage in any activity other than playing his instrument.

Through their reflections on the influence that mentors had on their careers, the musicians made it clear that mentors play a vital role in fostering self-efficacy, skill

development, and direction. Gabe said that a mentor is “somebody that not only will show you things but [will] believe in you.” Earnest was fortunate to have a mentor who not only believed in him but also took time to get to know him well enough to discover other skills and possible career paths that might have been suitable for him outside of music. It was because of this relationship that Earnest explored career fields in law enforcement, human sciences, and education, making him probably the most rounded musician participating in the study. Richard shared his sentiment of two band directors who had an impact on not only his style and approach as a musician “but really my confidence.” He continued to say that one of the band directors helped him find his voice on his instrument, which is a key factor to establishing an identity in music – what makes a musician unique. “[They] really helped me develop this attitude of when you walk into the room, you’re the greatest.” It is that sense of pride and confidence that musicians carry with them that prepares them to overcome intimidation and “rise to the occasion.”

Ryan believed that mentors are important to a musician’s career as they “walk you through that process on how to really do that thing called musician.” Without a mentor, Dorian said, “You really are just taking shots in the dark and making [stuff] up.” Victor supported that belief by saying that musicians need to “come up under somebody else as a shadow deal...at a level where they learn professionalism.” Playing jazz is not an easy feat according to some of the musicians, and Max said that he learned how to practice jazz music from his mentor. Ryan also said that his mentor really imparted knowledge onto him as he sought to master the difficulty of jazz music.

Category 3: Musicians’ peer relationships. Establishing relationships with other musicians is imperative for musicians who are looking for ways to survive and thrive in their

careers. Relationships with other musicians served as a unique source of validation in that musicians depend on one another to help build and share a positive reputation in the industry. The majority of Earnest's performances were booked because of referrals from other musicians and industry professionals who knew his reputation as an experienced drummer and producer. Willow said, "Band leaders are most impressed by other band members recommending other musicians." What one musician can say about another musician may be detrimental to getting opportunities, maintaining viability, and securing consistent referrals. Victor confirmed this by saying, "Your reputation exceeds you." Willow continued, "This person speaks for you and your work. That's how I got a lot of jobs." Earnest said that if it was not for other local artists and his relationship with Victor, he probably would not have had many local performance opportunities.

It is important to note that good relationships between musicians are mutually beneficial in that some musicians are not necessarily looking for performances but may need to give performances away. For example, when making a transition away from a church, Borus said, "I left the church in capable hands of a [musician] I knew, and he's still there now." Curry said that a musician should perform well so that he can be recognized and potentially be asked to perform at other events, which according to Willow begins to build a good reputation. It is a good reputation among other musicians that "helps to secure future employment." It is also important to note that the performance of the referred musician reflects on the reputation of the musician who may have referred him. Earnest recalled that some of his worst experiences were with people he hired to work for him behind certain artists who lacked effort.

Considering that musicality and skill are of high importance in a musician's career, learning from musicians is another reason why relationships between musicians are important. Musicians influence each other, learn from one another, and provide resources and support. To

paint a picture of the web of relationships among the musicians who participated in this study, Graydon mentored Max in jazz; Max took Gabe under his wing and believes he influenced him to learn the drums; Willow, Curry, and Earnest are all band mates and are recognized as the longest standing unit that has played together in the city; Richard and Borus were students of Earnest when Earnest served as band director at a local college; Richard gave much respect to Graydon for helping him see “music beyond the keyboard” to consider the production of a performance – they are employed at the same church; Graydon mentioned that he didn’t come out of his musical shell until he met Victor and Earnest as they all attended college together with Max; Victor and Earnest continuously provide support to one another through music and personal endeavors and are best friends; Millard and Willow grew up in the same music circuit; and Millard taught Max in college. This is only a glimpse of the relationships that exist among these musicians in the city and does not include the many performances where some of the musicians have played with and for each other.

Within this group of musicians, there is well over 100 years of experience. Much of their experiences include career habits, musical techniques, tricks of the trade, or simply wisdom and advice that can help the next AA male musician who is figuring out how to navigate a career in the music profession. A popular activity that musicians in the industry engage in when resources and space are available is called a “shed,” where accomplished and novice musicians come together and just play with no particular structure or agenda. Shedding is simply a chance to perform in front of peers or role models, take notes, learn, and discuss techniques. Unfortunately, even with all the skill and experience that the musicians in this study possess, shedding is not something that happens much in the city, and many of the musicians feel that this is a missed opportunity. Shedding can be a tool to establish cohesiveness among the local musicians while

providing an avenue for mentorship for the younger generation of musicians coming up, which both Graydon and Victor said is necessary for the viability of the art form.

Nevertheless, musicians share a bond or, as Hayward called it, “a brotherhood.” Relationships are built between musicians, and it becomes “like a network” according to Borus. For some musicians like Gabe, support comes from musicians with whom he shares the stage. Other musicians don’t even have to know the person playing the instrument, yet there is a mutual level of respect. Willow referred to that as giving and receiving when musicians build and share good reputations. Whether the outcome is gaining opportunity, good reputation, referrals for performances, or skills development, each musician in the study provided reasoning as to why his relationship with another musician influenced survival, preparation, or the opportunity to thrive on his career journey.

Category 4: Personal relationships. The researcher defined personal relationships as those meaningful connections that musicians may have with someone or a group who may not be based in music but influences the musician a great deal. These relationships most often provide a sense of encouragement and support. Romantic relationships were brought up by musicians who said that their wives sometimes served as their only support system. Four musicians were married at the time of the study. Two of the four musicians described the relationship they have with their wives and spoke to these relationships as being a source of validation. Jackson said, “My wife is very supportive. She is my number one fan.” He added that his wife helps him with discovering new music for him to cover, which to him is another sign of support.

One couple, Gabe and his wife, travel together as musicians. After admitting that he often felt alone because he has never had a good relationship with his mother and his father traveled so much, Gabe expressed, “I have a wife who is understanding because she’s a musician, too. My

wife is my only support system.” Being understanding is one thing that the other musicians, even those who were not married or in exclusive romantic relationships, said is the most important thing in romantic relationships. “Being married and being a musician – let’s just say you have to be with the right one who can understand what you do,” Borus said. Graydon said that “unless you meet somebody that understands that schedule, it just never works.”

Another important form of personal relationships is with members of fraternity groups. Six of the musicians mentioned that they belonged to a fraternity. These relationships are considered fruitful because of the connections that were established to support career movement or significant experiences. Jackson said making connections and networking was one of the main reasons why he joined the fraternity “because we have a lot of famous people in the organization.” Max talked about how after being on academic probation and deciding to leave his initial college, he made a phone call to one of his fraternity brothers and explained the result of this phone call:

I hit up my frat brother. So, my frat brother was like, "Man, we need to hit up frat. I know he can get you into the college he works at." Go down to audition, full ride scholarship. Best decision of my life.

Max’s experience highlights how musicians may utilize networks outside of their musician circle to gain a foothold or favor toward their career goals. Borus also offered that it was his fraternity brother who referred him to the job that he currently works outside of his playing for churches.

Musicians who are committed to a congregation and perform regularly for the church may find support in relationships with church members. Richard introduced his church family as a strong support system. Borus mentioned a relationship with his surrogate mother whom he met in a church he played for over the years. She gifted him and his wife with a vacation and says she is extremely supportive of his endeavors. Hayward also mentioned a church member who

connected him to outside employment, where he continues to work while he focuses on his musical goals. She serves as his supervisor, and because of their relationship, he was able to choose a shift that works perfectly for his practice and performance schedule.

Interpersonal relationships that musicians establish during the course of their careers are paramount in affirming, validating, and encouraging career choices and habits that yield success. Musicians in this study proved that family influences, guidance through mentorship, relationships with other musicians, and relationships with other people who support their musical endeavors are strategic and imperative for survival, preparation, and thriving on a musician's journey. Thus, these relationships deserve to be explored when examining career development and advancement of a musician.

Theme 3: Sociocultural Factors

Interviews revealed experiences that added context to environments and circumstances that shaped the career development and advancement process of AA male musicians. The sociocultural factors exposed were categorized by early experiences, cultural considerations, local and industry cultures, and economic considerations. Some of the topics discussed in this theme relate to those mentioned in the individual and interpersonal themes, such as family influence and the issues around compensation; however, the researcher provides more detail to these topics to understand what role they play in the lives of the musicians in the study.

Category 1: Early experiences. There are varied experiences that occurred during the early years of the musicians' lives that deserve attention. These experiences shed light on how the musicians were raised and what kind of circumstances in their families shaped who they are as musicians. Thirteen among the musicians grew up in two-parent households; two of them experienced their parents' divorces in later years. One musician grew up in a single-parent

household, and the other musician said that his mother did not marry until he was five years old. All musicians grew up with siblings. Three of the musicians were raised in big cities where the music culture was prevalent. Willow said that he grew up in a town that was “pretty active” in music. His early memories revealed that his parents were regular patrons of blues clubs on the weekends. One other musician was born and raised in a Southern state where the strongest musical influences were his family. Each of the four musicians from other cities migrated to the local area in their later years when the opportunity to attend college presented itself.

Each of the fifteen musicians reported that he developed a desire for music before the age of fifteen. Earnest said that at age two, he began playing drums with sticks he tore off hangers and used shoe boxes as the drum set. Millard spoke about how he and his mother had to pay for his instrument since his father was not supportive, and that required him to work at a young age to afford to buy his first guitar. Other musicians talked about parents who bought them toy instruments to get started in music. Earnest and Graydon openly admitted to being poor growing up. “I lived in housing projects,” stated Graydon. Earnest said that his neighborhood was so poor that “the teachers would get together and come to school early and make cheese toast and little stuff because a lot of the kids didn't have food.” Both musicians mentioned that it was because of their earlier memories of poverty and financial struggles that they decided to either move to pursue education or create multiple streams of income. Each musician provided only brief details about his early experiences but referenced how his growing up shaped some part of his approach to music (or thoughts about his musicality), mentality toward people, or individual character.

Category 2: AA Culture, Church Culture, and Local Culture. The musicians shared their views about the cultural aspects of their personal and professional ecosystems that impact

their career mindsets, habits, and activities. Consideration should be given to the etic codes of AA culture and its comparison to the majority ethnic group and emic codes that musicians used to describe the music industry, church culture, and local music scene.

African American culture. There are instances where being an AA male impacts career experiences. Millard offered, “In a society like we have in America, the perception of any Black person is going to be on the downside, not the upside.” He went on to say that many times he has had to dispel stereotypes. “As far as different ethnicities, it’s certain things that we have to deal with that they don’t,” Millard said as he discussed his belief on the role that being AA may play in his career. He went on to say, “There are certain obstacles that are inevitable that we’ve grown accustomed to.” One of the many obstacles is racism and discrimination. Hayward spoke about an instance when he felt like treatment toward him was different because he was Black: “Just the aura you get from people, the lack of respect you feel.” Dorian told of an incident when he was referred to a performance by one of his musician friends who later had to let him know that the venue preferred a White band.

Not all musicians believed that being Black was a factor in gaining employment or resulted in having negative experiences. Millard recalled that most of his childhood and young adult years were influenced by segregation and inequality. “Most of the symphony performers were white, of course, but I knew them.” Although music opportunities may have been dominated by the majority, Millard said, “I can’t think of any way that it might have hindered.” He indicated that it was his confidence in his skills and social capital that led him to becoming a member of one of the leading orchestras of the state. He believed [being Black] advanced his opportunities, “Whenever a performance comes up that’s dealing with Black music, I think I have an advantage.” Another musician also said that being of an ethnic background has not

hindered his experience: “I didn’t get, or not get the opportunity because of my skin. I never had an instance to where they didn’t hire me because I’m Black.” Latrell plainly said, “I’m glad I’m Black. I never really had problems with racism. Every white person I know, they love me.” He continued to share that he believes there is equal opportunity in music, “I feel like music is kind of fair. You get a fair shot at it without being under a label.”

There were data that highlighted some cultural consideration regarding Blacks and their comparisons to the majority in music and church culture. In terms of music, Ryan said that there is something to be learned from “Caucasian folks, from Asian folk, Hispanic folk; anywhere from West Africa. The way they view music is beautiful.” It was mentioned by Millard that White communities see the value in different art forms, “greater than the creators at this point in history.” Millard insinuated that the creators are Black. He went on to make the point that Blacks do not value the art:

So, [Whites] are perpetrators of [art], not us. You find a young Black guy hardly ever will you see him saying, “oh, I want to be a blues musician, I want to be a jazz musician, I want to be a rock star. I want to be like Prince.’ You don’t see that.”

Richard supported Millard’s views of being the creators of music:

Historically speaking, we’re probably the most evolved people when it comes to our music, because we’re the creators of so many things. Not only are we the creators of blues, we are solely the creators of what we now know as Rock’n’Roll and folk music, which people won’t give us credit for, but we are, which is now modern-day country.

Ryan offered similar sentiments:

Then there’s jazz on the other hand. Because it’s originally an African American art form. There’s no issue there. That’s us. So, we own that scene. Different races don’t mind seeing us because that’s what we do. We rhythm. We know soul. We know ballads. We all the – we even know Latin rhythms...because that’s what we do.

Blacks are not the only ones who believe Black musicians are talented, according to Dorian. He believed that “white people automatically assume that a Black musician will be a better musician,” and Ryan said that when he walks into a classroom with a diverse group of musicians, “They honestly don’t sound much better than what I hear the first day.” The difference is “They have more opportunities to make it in the classical arena.”

Another major difference in AA culture compared to the majority culture can be witnessed in business practices. Despite the distasteful experience mentioned by Hayward, he shared, “I’ve been in situations where they [White people] do business right,” providing printed checks and issuing them on the day of the performance. Hayward continued to share that he has had unfavorable experiences with Blacks where he has had altercations “where you’ve had to hump folks up to get your money.” This difference in business practices can also be seen in hiring practices. At the time of the interview, Victor was preparing for the application process to become a drummer at a large Pentecostal church. The auditioning and application processes were lengthy. He shared the kinds of questions asked on the application, some that inquired about his spirituality, experiences he faced in his life, struggles that he has had to overcome, work condition preferences, his ability to work with other people, and musical history. In regard to his feelings about the process, he stated:

This is [another] level of auditioning. Most predominantly Black churches, predominantly Baptist churches, allow you to come in, you meet the pastor, meet someone like the minister of music, and word of mouth gets you in there, your circle. It’s a cultural thing because the more business side the actual church is, there they want to be organized.

As a part of the hiring process, Victor indicated that he had to prepare for two auditions, one where he performed alone and another with the existing band. This church sent music beforehand and provided YouTube videos so Victor can be prepared to perform the music as

expected. This experience was different from that of Latrell when he was hired at a Black mega church considering that Latrell was not given adequate time to prepare, accept the position, and transition to working for the church.

Church culture. For many upcoming AA musicians, playing for a church is one of the most accessible experiences they can have early in their careers. All but one musician played for churches growing up. Victor introduced this idea of access, “[Playing for churches] helped the ones that don’t really get the opportunity to do it outside the church. That’s the only experience that they’re going to get.” Admitting that many of the musicians he knows come from the church, Hayward believed that churches help to train the ear of musicians: “It gives you a training that no school can prepare you for.” Although churches provide the opportunity and informal training, Victor believed that a common practice in Black churches is to allow the musician to train the wrong way:

So, a kid can come up playing in church, and can be playing the keyboard. And be transposing, he's using the transpose button to go from one octave key to the next key. Instead of learning each key, he's hitting the transpose button and making that go up, meaning the actual program on the keyboard is taking key, and he doesn't really have to learn the positions of his fingers. And what happens is he trains himself that that's the way to do it. When he comes to play for that person, or goes on the road, or goes to another person, gets outside of his comfort zone of the church that he's in, not the church in general, but the church that he's in. Then he doesn't know any better.

One of the musicians also believed that some of the struggles that exist in Black churches are related to politics. Graydon said that in Black churches, much of the leadership is vying for power and control. He believed this mentality comes from the notion that Blacks do not possess much power or have control in other environments except at church. Another consideration offered by Dorian has to deal with issues between skill and affordability, saying that some churches may only be able to afford a certain level of skill. Affordability of quality equipment

was also something that was indirectly brought up during Hayward's interview. He mentioned that often when he travels to other churches, he is expected to produce high quality music on equipment that is not quality equipment, which may be a result of what the church can afford:

So, while you may be doing a performance for a Black event, whether it's for church or R&B, you got to come in , you got to bring in your own equipment...versus, I've been in a lot of white venues where the equipment is there, all I got to do is bring my bass, come in and play. That takes a lot of wear and tear off of [the instrument].

Another consideration of church culture comes from the general idea that church musicians must maintain a certain level of integrity in their character. Although this expectation may be adopted by the church community, Graydon believed that "people think you have to be perfect to work in the church." Curry said that working for the church requires that he be "on my Ps and Qs" because people are judgmental. Victor also brought up the point that in Black churches, there is an unspoken expectation to adhere to the traditions of the church, which may affect what kind of music musicians are able to perform. This mentality and these expectations also affect how musicians who play for the church are perceived when they participate in musical experiences outside of church. Borus offered, "Being a church musician, if you want to get out on the night scene, some people in the church condemn that." Despite this opinion, Borus also indicated that playing for the church offers longevity and that he has played for his church for over ten years. He suggested that having a good relationship with the administrative staff and making it clear to them that one is just not trying to take advantage of the church and "is a good situation because you can get what you're asking for [in terms of pay] and get what you need spiritually."

The final consideration of church culture deals with issues of how musicians are regarded as professionals and with compensation. Graydon shared an obstacle that deals with the mindset

of “church folks,” as Curry would call the people who are a part of the congregation. Having worked at this church as a minister of music and as a staff church musician Graydon struggles working for the church had to do with how musicians are treated:

What I learned is church, even though as vital as music is to the Black church, they do not value us at all. We are as expendable as a dirty paper towel.’

Graydon also claimed that in Black churches, especially in leadership, “You live under scrutiny. Everything is a perception when you are in leadership.” Curry supported Graydon’s statement by saying, “You have to be aware and upright of dealing with church folks.” Earnest stated, “Working for the church is horrible.” The mindset of the church leadership does not always support musicianship as a profession. Earnest continued to clarify why he labeled his experience as horrible:

Just like when I talked about when I first played at home and my pastor was like, “I’m letting you play.” So that same mentality carries over to these churches that pay you. They feel like “well, I’m paying you, so you ought to be happy I’m paying you.” But no! You’re paying me because I’m doing a service.

Victor added more about the struggle of pay when working for the church, claiming that the people who determine the pay scale are not musicians and most likely do not know what is involved in the work of a musician.

Graydon and Borus expressed the same frustration when it comes to churches paying musicians. Graydon offered, “[Church clergy] always badmouth us for wanting to be paid for our vocation,” and Borus said, “Some people try to convict you for capitalizing off the church.” The expectation is that since music is a gift from God, musicians should offer that gift in ministry for free, and Dorian admitted that he lives by the same sentiment in that he does not mind performing for church for free as a sacrifice to God.

The musicians often faced adversity related to compensation even outside of working for churches and believed that they do not get paid what they are worth. Max described why it is so hard to be a musician: “People [take] your talents for granted...not wanting to pay you what you’re worth.” The concept of worth should take into consideration the time spent learning the music, practicing the music, rehearsing with the band or ensemble, and performing in addition to the work of setting up and breaking down instruments and traveling to and from the performance venue (if applicable). Earnest offered a different vantage point regarding worth and pay: “You’re not paying me what I’m worth. You’re paying me what this job requires,” which insinuates that the compensation musicians quote includes the tasks mentioned above.

Dorian explained that the timing of when musicians receive pay is often problematic. He stated that many musicians do not receive payment until the time of the performance or in some cases after a performance. “All the work you do up until the performance, if they decide at the last minute to cancel, it’s gone, it’s gone,” Dorian stated. This means that there may be cases when musicians put in the work necessary to prepare for a job, and it is time wasted if the promoter or client decides not to host the event. A similar instance occurred with Max when his band prepared and performed for an event and did not receive the pay expected, and the host was not available or willing to make concessions about pay. This situation had much to do with ineffective communication around the expected pay but sheds light on the issue of pay.

When Victor started providing drum lessons, he mentioned that he was not getting paid for it. Eventually he started setting rates. Latrell provided a glimpse of how people usually respond to hearing his performance rate of \$50 per song:

You can say those numbers and people be like, ""Whaaat? Who [do you think you are]?" They don't really understand [that] it's more than just seeing me at the show, plucking up, playing, looking cool. I had to put in like twenty hours before you see this two-hour show. You basically paying for my time to have this

[perfect]. Now, if I come to the gig and I'm lacking, I can't ask for that. If you're a serious professional musician, and you are studying each song, track by track, every break that's in there, every transition, the key of each song, you can easily ask for \$50 each song if you got a thirty-song playlist. That's considered good pay. Really, that's considered what it's costing me to make this happen.

His justification offers the conclusion that payment is not just for time but also for the work of learning and knowing the song. The reaction to his rates confirms that people generally do not understand the value, worth, and investment of a musician's work. Furthermore, the comment "Who do you think you are?" demonstrates an attack on the identity and self-worth of the musician.

Music culture and industry considerations. Above the layer of cultural considerations, Earnest offered that people of other ethnic backgrounds probably have the same issues that Blacks experience in music because "You don't tend to see color like that" in music. Gabe shared similar views in that in music, "You aren't a color, period, because music is the color of your support." He continued, "No one ethnicity owns the sound of music unless it's like part of their heritage." Graydon shared that he believes Black musicians are type-cast just like they are in the movie entertainment industry, only chosen to play certain music or "only get picked for certain events, venues, and opportunities." He also shared that for many years he was ashamed of his gift to play piano because piano players, especially in the church, who can sing are stigmatized as gay.

Paradise for Victor would be that the music culture is mixed up among ethnicities. He explained why it is a problem for musicians to be type-cast in music:

When you think certain styles of music, you think white or Black, and that's a problem, because I think our culture has gotten us to this - is this group of people because this is what it sounds like, this is what it looks like. This is this group of people because this is what [they] dress like, look like, sound like... I would have us all, force us to change, learn a different style and stick with that until you learn that sound in its authenticity.

Understanding that within the music culture, Black musicians are perceived a certain way because of the kind of music that is portrayed through their culture, gives insight as to why Richard said he is scared of the kind of music that is popular in today's culture: "It's not as adept, nor really as astute." Gabe offered a thought that supports Richard:

I think it's because society's mindset changed on what they considered entertainment and what Black folks mindset changed as being, as far as what they appreciate. Like if you look at the young Blacks today, what they appreciate is what they have seen all their young life which is the rap [and] hip hop phase. So, they have little appreciation for anything that came before that.

Straight-ahead-jazz is one of the music forms many musicians suggested should be studied as it allows them to learn the intricacies of playing difficult music while learning skills that may help with all other genres. When talking about the benefit of learning straight-ahead-jazz, Gabe mentioned that many of the musicians today are not interested in learning this kind of music.

After the experience of traveling across the nation, Latrell concluded that every music scene is different in different cities. This applies to musicians as well: "Every city has a different breed of musicians. Some are cocky. Some are humble." Since this is the case, musicians must know how to adapt to the music of their geographical location. Earnest discussed that some of the issues that he has experienced with church culture is unique to smaller markets because he has never had to deal with access to venues for practicing, compensation, or connecting with other musicians when he played in other cities. In terms of the sound of music, however, Graydon said, "Everybody sounds exactly the same." When musicians who are very talented sound completely different than everybody else, Richard said, "They don't like you." This presents a struggle in the music culture for musicians who dare to be different and confident in their ability.

Some of the industry considerations that impacted musicians in this study dealt with the changes in technology and direction of music over time. Graydon offered that technology in the music and lighting industry changes. He shared the following:

Music changes every six months. There are always new technologies. There are always new processes. There's always a different hybrid of music coming out or a different hybrid of light fixtures coming out.

Many of the musicians who were born before the 1990's referred to how there was not as much help with marketing themselves as there is now with social media, smart devices, and sites like YouTube. Earnest told a story of how in awe he was to meet one of his role models in music: "This was before the internet was hot...you couldn't just reach out and see these people online." Victor talked about how it was hard to showcase his skills or even learn from other musicians outside of live performances or face-to-face gatherings because YouTube was not popular then, cell phones did not have built-in video camera technology, and although he had a handheld video recorder, he couldn't capture everything he wanted to. Latrell also mentioned how YouTube was not available to him growing up, so learning music was something he had to teach himself. Now, however, Victor said that there is "no excuse to not be able to do anything" because you can find an instructional video on YouTube to learn how to do it. As for a different side of technology changes, Curry talked about the struggle he had with keeping his recording studios open. Due to the fact that software systems and music equipment necessary to produce music are being created for people to produce music at home, he had to close his studios down. It was no longer a profitable business.

Another change in the industry that affected AA male musicians dealt with job opportunities. Willow recalled that the result of the stock market crash in the late 2000s forced businesses to streamline expenses and "people stopped hiring live bands to do events." Instead,

businesses began to hire DJs to play at special functions. Millard offered that the climate for live performances has changed so dramatically that “doing something like what I did in the 70s and 80s is not even possible anymore.” As Willow approached this turbulence as a live music performer, he mentioned that musicians had to think about other avenues of employment in music like becoming studio musicians or playing for music scores behind film productions.

In terms of career pathways, Ryan believed that there are limited options through music education. “In college sometimes they make it seem like it’s either one or the other.” Earnest started a production company offering audio production services to clients who desire to have a full sound including many instruments on their record. Gabe has created mobile applications and streaming technology that can be used by musicians to attain work opportunities around the world and manage their time and commitment to performances and bands. Graydon started his own lighting company and often relies on his musical ability to choose lighting techniques behind staged performances that can enhance the music. In this same vein, Graydon also discussed how he believed that to be more marketable, musicians have to think about things outside of just the music when it comes to securing employment or performing.

The last industry consideration revealed in this study had to deal with the perceptions of being on tour. Performing on tour is seen by Max as a level of accomplishment. He said that if a musician is touring, then that signifies that “he made it.” However, being on tour is not always seen as positive by everyone who may support a musician’s career choices. This point was made by Hayward stating that “musicians have a bad rep anyway, but especially on tour when you’re away from home.” He continued to say that many times musicians adopt this unspoken rule: that “what happens on tour stays on tour. Anything goes.” Max talked about the many stories that his mentor, who was very connected in the music industry, told about the many musicians who

engaged in life-altering experiences while on tour that consisted of drug use, alcohol abuse, and sexual addictions. Although Victor claimed that tour life is not all that it is cracked up to be, he also made a point that speaks to how musicians can get caught up in bad behaviors on tour, considering that music is a gateway in and out of the spiritual warfare that occurs, and musicians are “automatically in that system regardless.”

Local culture. Victor assured the researcher that if this study was conducted in a different place, it would most likely yield different information, so exploring the local culture where AA male musicians thrive is important. Max recalled the time when the city was very well known for bringing the music “greats” to the city. Both the researcher and Max mentioned the documentary produced by a state based television production company that shares the history of the presence on the “chitlin circuit” in his city, which is what they called the thread of geographical destinations that many of the Black artists and their musicians traveled to perform when they were not allowed to perform on major concert stages with white artists or for white audiences. Max shared more about his views by saying the following:

Back in the day, all the greats [were] coming through [here]. See, we got to get back to that. That’s what me and one of my band mates are trying to do. Back in the day, [this place] was a hub. You didn’t come in the south and not stop through [here] on your way to [the next big city].”

Willow and Millard both mentioned how they were able to meet and perform on stages with some of the "greats" that traveled through their city on the chitlin circuit. Millard said, “Back during the time I met Willow, there were musicians and bands everywhere!” Although the culture has changed since those times, Hayward said that the local culture has blossomed a bit. New artists are emerging and making ways for musicians to play behind new talents. Ryan confirmed that “there is never a lack of work” in the city.

Other musicians were not as positive about the music culture in the local area. “It’s not fun at all being a professional in this city,” Earnest said as he reflected on many of the trying experiences he faced on the local music scene. Musicians felt like the culture of the local musician community is disconnected. Victor and Dorian both mentioned that there is a mentality in the local music culture that instead of supporting one another, there are efforts to “pull you down.” This adds to the challenge that Jackson spoke about when he said that “it’s really hard in [this state] especially if you are trying to break through the glass ceiling.” The same opinion was shared when Curry offered that it is challenging for musicians to get into the music scene: “You have to have connections with other guys to do what you are trying to do.” Considering this and the fact that musicians are disconnected in the city, Latrell said that the music industry in his city is small.

Category 3: Economic factors. Many of the choices made by musicians were influenced by economic factors in their environments. When discussing adversities that they face while working in church settings, much of the feedback indicated that issues with compensation is one of the barriers in their careers. The other economic consideration that emerged was addressed relative to the varied pay rates and the pay scale that musicians usually operate from when booking performance opportunities.

When asked about the range of their compensation, the musicians’ responses varied a great deal with all musicians saying “free” as the lowest. Dorian was the only musician who mentioned bartering services as a strategy to combat requests to perform free. The highest paid opportunity was \$8,000 for studio time to perform and assist with producing a project in three days. Graydon indicated that \$250 to \$800 is the average amount a musician may earn on a Sunday performing in church. He quoted, “If it’s a smaller church, compensation is \$100 to

about \$250.” Richard said that upper tier tours pay about \$1,800 - \$2,500 a night including per diem “because I should not be paying [for] my own things while I’m on the road.” Millard set a base fee of \$300 that the client would be expected to pay automatically to book him. Borus said average pay is \$600, while Victor said his highest pay for a performance was \$850 to play two songs at an awards show. Dorian’s highest pay was \$350 for a performance, but his average pay was about \$100 or \$250 for a reception solo.

While on tour, Latrell reported that on average he receives about \$200 for each show. His experience commuting back and forth to a different state to play at the mega church was more favorable financially than his tour. He offered that the experience was worth the trouble because of his pay. This mega church had the budget to pay its musicians such high salaries. Of course, this standard changes at the local level as indicated by “The size of the church is probably the most influential factor in what a person gets paid.” He continued to say, “We have some churches whose weekly budget for their musician department is \$600; some budgets [are] \$400.” Borus said that he hated to admit that one technique he practices before committing to play long term for the church was to canvas the congregation to evaluate its giving power. This helps him to gauge the financial health of the church.

When talking about the pay systems in Black churches, Victor offered, “There is no pay scale or scale to decide how much or how great a person really is.” This suggests that churches and musicians do not have a set standard rate for compensation. Nevertheless, Hayward and Victor gave examples of what musicians are paid in the church. For example, Victor said, “They will pay an organist \$300 a Sunday; a keyboardist \$200 a Sunday. We’re going to pay a bass player \$50 and a drummer \$25.” This seemed to be a normal circumstance that musicians are paid based on their instrument. Hayward also provided a pay scale, saying that drummers receive

\$100 to \$175 a week; bass players receive \$125-\$200; and keyboardists and organists are paid \$250 to \$400. Based on this data, it is apparent that all the musicians receive different pay.

Drummers make the lowest amount compared to other band members despite the significant role the drummer plays in the music. Victor offered a similar opinion:

They think a drummer is the lowest paid thing, but we play the whole time, we never stop. If you think about it, when the organist is playing or the drummer's always playing during the service. The bass player can fall out, and the drummer can still be going, and the music can still be going. But when the drummer stops playing or if he messes up everybody's gone look at him like what's wrong, because we're so used to that rhythm.

Earnest, Victor, and Hayward all believed that drummers are not paid equally and experience a disadvantage in pay compared to other instruments.

Even with the inconsistencies in pay, the church lends itself to be a source of consistent pay for musicians. One of the downfalls of the musician profession is the unpredictable cash flow. Gabe described it as “unsteady income.” Graydon suggested that his musicians invest in stocks or IRAs to generate additional income because in this business, one has to create multiple streams of income or diversify the ability to make money. Gabe said that there was no limit to some of the things he was willing to do to generate revenue (cut lawns, build websites, etc.).

The various responses to pay rates and pay scales indicate that there is no set of standards to determine the rates. Instead, musicians must accept the pay that may be offered, considering that any payment is steady income. These economic factors along with considerations of their ethnic, local, music, and industry cultures appear to help to shape the personal and professional lives of AA male musicians. These sociocultural factors have provided contextual evidence as to what influences may exist in the environment of AA male musicians and how these cultural influences have affected their music careers.

Theme 4: Career Management Activities & Considerations

Musicians provided details of their career self-management behaviors by sharing thoughts, habits, and strategies that they choose to employ in order to survive, take initiative to recover from adversity, prepare for career experiences, and thrive in accomplishing career goals. Career thoughts and activities have been categorized in the respective stages of the career management process that coincide with career resilience and adaptability: survival, initiation, recovery, preparation, and thriving. In addition, the musicians also provided references as to what external resources, tools, or entities have been helpful to them while managing their career development and advancement process.

Category 1: Career Survival. Data included in this category describe the career self-management behaviors that the musicians suggested to be used to survive in the music industry and within the local music scene. These behaviors often impact or require consideration to individual and interpersonal factors that are absolutely necessary to build character, skill, and presence in professional settings. Many of the musicians offered similar thoughts, habits, and strategies, and a few of them offered considerations that were unique compared to other musician's responses.

The first level of career self-management behaviors that are required to survive in the music industry is grounded in faith and belief in a higher power. As it was mentioned in findings of Theme 1: Individual Factors, spirituality has served as the foundation for all the musicians in the study. Data related to having faith in God helps to establish motivation, endurance, and necessary characteristics that will become important for relationship building and career movement. Willow, Richard, and Victor all mentioned prayer as a strategy and technique that they employ to build their faith and dependency on God. Jackson said that he meditates as a

source of strengthening his faith, “I meditate, it’s how I progress through life.” This foundation of faith and spirituality allows musicians to build character traits that align with moral standards, which ultimately prepares musicians for survival in the industry.

The other set of career survival self-management behaviors relate to personal character and attitude that govern how the musician thinks about himself and how he interacts with others. To survive the music industry, Willow said that musicians must first realize their potential, which Richard said that realizing his skill helped to shape his career identity as a musician. Establishing an identity in music relies on the musician’s realizing what he can possibly accomplish using his gift, talent, or skill. Musicians regard career identity as extremely important when the musician is seeking relevance and presence in the industry. Once a musician establishes an identity, he can begin to pursue career activities in alignment with career identity that will help him progress through the career management process.

Another behavior relative to career survival self-management is adopting self-efficacy. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Willow and Richard believed that musicians have a personal responsibility to engage in self-efficacy thoughts and behaviors that identify and build confidence in the belief that they are capable of performing and are able to achieve goals they have set for themselves. Richard shared that his strategy for practicing self-efficacy is telling himself, “I am the best in the room.” Considering this, self-efficacy and confidence require an inward approach to evaluating thoughts and engaging in career behaviors, habits, and activities mentioned in the second stage of the career management process – taking initiative. Once a musician establishes confidence and self-efficacy, the next set of behaviors is relative to education. Willow said, “Musicians have the responsibility to educate themselves about what is going on in music and the type of equipment and technology being used.” Graydon

recommended that every musician learn every aspect of his craft: “Stay abreast on current music methods, materials, promotional items, and administrative techniques.” Willow suggested that a musician not become naïve in the process; instead, he needs to research and gain knowledge as opposed to waiting for someone else to share or give them advice, resources, or opportunities.

Other career survival self-management behaviors relative to personal character that are important to keep in mind if a musician is seeking to survive are to be genuine, honest, and future-oriented. Being genuine is a strategy that Gabe recommended musicians employ when they “mean what you say [and] say what you mean.” The result of being genuine is being recognized by other musicians as trustworthy, which is an attribute that Dorian and Jackson said is important. Curry suggested that a musician be future-oriented so that he is able to set goals and recognize opportunities.

Another set of career survival self-management behaviors that are necessary to survive the industry relates to skill building. There was consensus among all the musicians that every AA male musician should learn to read music. The most frequent career habit and suggestion from all musicians in this study was to “study theory.” Investing in theory courses or some form of formal education around music theory was paramount for Millard, Gabe, Jackson, Ryan, and Max during their careers. Others who did not actively engage in learning how to read music or knowing music theory said that they wished it was something they did because this skill is a requirement for major professional opportunities in the global entertainment industry. Latrell made the comparison that knowing theory is just like possessing an educational degree. Aside from studying theory, studying jazz music was another frequent response to the career habits or strategies that the musicians believed help maintain survival. The difficulty and intricacies of

jazz music helps to build coordination and memory, two of the things that Dorian said he had to practice often when performing.

In addition to learning how to read and studying theory, each musician emphasized practicing as the most consistent strategy to build skill. Some of the musicians provided detailed recommendations as to what to practice. Richard suggested that every musician understand every dimension of his instrument “so much so that they can literally breakdown their instrument and put it back together again.” Engaging in informal playing or air playing is something both Earnest and Victor admitted to doing when they were not able to formally sit with their instruments to play. Informal playing means there is no structure to practicing; Victor described it as “playing around” with the instrument. Air playing is the practice of imagining playing an instrument without the real instrument. Earnest described this technique: “I would practice with my hands and imagine I'm playing the drum set. I've learned a lot of music that way.”

For more formal practice, Victor suggested that musicians focus on learning rudiments, dynamics, working with both hands, and musical timing. He also mentioned two practice styles, survival practice and advance practice, that may be utilized depending on the desired outcome. The most important part of practicing is “listening to music,” Victor said. The musicians indicated listening to music is a key component of studying music. In fact, all the musicians recommended that aspiring musicians listen to different styles and genres of music. They indicated that the purpose of studying different genres is to improve their musical palette and increase their ability to engage with music that can speak with various audiences. To this point, Ryan said, “Study world music, because that is what’s really going to make that music transparent. It’s going to make it universal and speaks to all people.”

Considering the individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors discussed, the career survival self-management behaviors that are absolutely necessary for musicians relate to strengthening faith and their belief in a higher power; adopting self-efficacy thoughts and behaviors; engaging in education to learn how to read music and music theory; building personal character traits such as humility, genuineness, trustworthiness, honesty, and a future-oriented mindset; practicing and listening to all genres and styles of music; and making connections with people to establish supportive relationships by being personable and building a good reputation. If these behaviors are adopted and employed repetitively throughout the career development and advancement process, musicians believe that they will be able to maintain survival.

Category 2: Taking initiative. Some self-management behaviors require musicians to take initiative in their careers. The musicians recommended that musicians move beyond the survival stage and not rely solely on skill. Earnest mentioned that education is not enough. Although skill and education in music are important, participants felt that musicians must also take initiative to move closer to capitalizing on opportunities. The career survival self-management behaviors recommended by the musicians requires musicians to self-evaluate, set standards and goals, and seek opportunities.

Self-evaluation is the process of constantly addressing areas within the self that may relate to personal goals, skills, and abilities. Max said, “You got to self-evaluate yourself [asking] what am I doing? Why am I not talking into the microphone when it’s down time at the end of the song?” Gabe shared how he used self-evaluative practices when he needed to decide which career activities were best for him: “Never take a job without [asking]: What do I want to be? Where do I want to go? How does this line up with what I’m trying to do with my life?” Self-evaluation also has its place in managing relationships. Richard and Latrell both shared

instances where they have had to evaluate the relationships with friends and people around them. In fact, Richard said that one of the sacrifices that musicians must consider making is leaving behind people because “everybody can’t go with you” on the journey to success.

Another career self-management behavior that requires initiative is setting standards and goals. Setting standards also applies to work ethic. Both Graydon and Millard claimed that their work ethic is a result of the high standards they set for themselves. The reason why Millard believed he has been able to accomplish so much is because he has set a bar of excellence in his performances. He strives to “go above and beyond” each time he performs. Graydon also follows the same mindset that performance standards are important, which is why he adds more to his musical performance than just music, such as the dynamics of lights and the use of video images to add contextual cues to the music. One consideration to keep in mind when setting standards was highlighted when Graydon referred to the process he took when he recorded his first album: “I didn’t want to put out anything I didn’t like, and I wanted it to be comparable to what was already out.” This suggests that musicians must have a comparable base or example to set a standard. Jackson and Graydon have used the success of others to determine standards for their music and their accomplishments and suggested that upcoming musicians do the same.

Setting goals is another career survival self-management behavior or strategy that requires musicians to take initiative. Setting goals requires musicians to prioritize and plan. Victor said that after he got married, he has had to “cut back” on playing for churches. Now that he desires to go back to playing for churches, he had to prioritize and set goals. At the time of the interview, he was preparing for an audition at a major Pentecostal church in a city that was seeking a drummer, a goal that he hopes “can work out for me to start back again.” When

defining success, Willow said, “Success is defined by accomplishing things you set out to do,” which infers that musicians must first set goals to accomplish in order to go after success.

Seeking opportunities presents another set of self-management behaviors that require musicians to take initiative in their careers. Many of the musicians referred to this career habit by offering strategies and techniques that will aid in “putting yourself out there” as suggested by Richard. Although many of the musicians referenced that opportunities that they have been able to pursue have come from referrals from other musicians, it is apparent through the data that self-marketing is still necessary to build a brand and secure opportunities. Jackson detailed some of the strategies that he has had to undertake when attempting to get booked in the local venues. He sends videos, promotional emails, and record samples of songs and posts on social media.

Willow recommended that in order to be in position for opportunities, musicians must “be everywhere there is music.” This helps to keep musicians in the know of what is going on in the music circuit and, as Dorian recommended, stay visible on the music scene. One consideration for musicians is the notion of thinking outside of the box, which Willow says is helpful when getting creative about securing income, and not be limited in the approach to establishing creativity and opportunity as advised by Earnest, Graydon, Gabe, and Jackson.

The final set of career survival management behaviors that require musicians to take initiative relates to networking. Every musician in the study mentioned networking as a tool they have used to acquire resources, establish relationships and reputation, and create opportunities. Earnest and Victor talked about the pastors of their churches being in their network, which led them to have access to a practice venue. Earnest discussed how his network and reach is what afforded him the opportunity to acquire endorsements. Hayward talked about how a church member in his network offered him the opportunity to secure outside employment where he was

able to set his schedule around music obligations. Asking questions and taking the initiative to start conversations is a starting point to networking. Gabe reminisced about a time when he walked into a retail store that sold guitars and asked for a job out of frustration that the clerk who attempted to sell him a guitar did not know much about the product. The initiative he took to ask for a job, along with a good interview actually secured him the job.

Category 3: Recovery. At this stage of the career management process, there are actions that may be best suited to recover anything lost while engaging in career experiences, such as money, time, effort, reputation, or support. Musicians offered career habits and considerations that they have employed after learning lessons or having been through some form of adversity.

A recovery strategy that Graydon suggested is for musicians to incorporate themselves into a business. He mentioned that musicians may not want to report all their income; Dorian admitted that he appreciates getting “under the table money” because it helps him financially. Graydon also offered that his mentality about the subject of money was influential to his ability to recover from adversity in his finances. He stated that musicians must remember that “you [are] not broke, it’s because you think you [are] broke” that perpetuates that mindset. Graydon believed that the best way to move away from this mindset is to invest and save money.

Dorian offered a unique strategy that he has employed as a result of working and not getting paid for services. When he saw the opportunity to negotiate or barter for services with an organization that did not have funds to pay him to perform, he made it work for him. He explained that he was at the point in his career when he needed to put out promotional materials as he was working on releasing an album, but he did not own any cameras to film footage. Dorian used this point to barter when asked to perform for a local business owner. This business agreed to film his performance, which is what Dorian used to promote his album.

One of the challenges that the musicians spoke about dealt with work/life balance. To address this challenge, some of the musicians talked about how they managed their time. Curry gave a list of different employment responsibilities that he was in charge of and offered that he schedules his performances and rehearsals strategically. Hayward also discussed how he was able to play for three different churches at the same time because he managed his time well enough to where his playing for one church did not conflict with the other. In addition to being able to play for multiple churches, Hayward chose a work schedule that is only from eleven o'clock to four o'clock during the week, which allows him to work late on music projects and still get enough rest to report to work on time, get off in enough time to make rehearsals, and fulfill all obligations to work and music.

Considering how Curry and Hayward have been able to manage the issue of work/life balance, time management is an area that deserves attention. One consideration that Dorian recommended musicians keep in mind is learning when to say no. Although Dorian's adversity dealt with the issue of pay, the point made about learning when to say no still applies to the issue of time. For Earnest, the decision to say "no" to continue working in corporate America was so that he could "regain ground" in music and dedicate more time to his music. Graydon recommended that musicians "establish more free time to be creative." Richard said that he simply had to narrow down his obligations and make sacrifices to dedicate adequate time to practicing, rehearsing, and preparing for performances.

Category 4: Preparation. The career habits and actions shared at this stage of the career management process are those that the musicians said helped them to reach a certain level of success. Many of these strategies required the musicians to employ career habits mentioned in all

previous stages in order to reach the stage of preparation. Nevertheless, the musicians offered strategies that support a musician's stride to accomplish a goal or add benefit to his career.

"Chance favors a prepared mind. If you are always prepared, the chances [will] always be in your favor, because you're prepared or you've taken the preparations," is a philosophy that governs Max's mindset about taking the necessary steps to seize the chance, whatever that "chance" may be for musicians. For many of the musicians, the first strategy to prepare for any opportunity that requires musical talent and ability is to learn the music, practice, and rehearse. The musicians mentioned these are three different tasks in the preparation process, which suggests that the musician will need adequate time to execute the tasks. Curry shared that assessing how much time is necessary to spend on preparation strategies depends on workload (the number of songs the musician has to practice, rehearse, and perform), the difficulty of the music (evaluating the skills and abilities), and the familiarity with the artist who may be leading the performance.

Musicians also discussed the need to prepare for the business of being a musician. Willow provided insight about the kind of "business" that is behind the work of being a musician who is operating his business. He said that doing business as a musician is reliant on lifestyles and business practices. Lifestyle may relate to the amount of rest, the kind of food and drink he consumes, and family obligations. According to the musicians, being professional consists of punctuality, accountability, preparedness, choice and knowledge of equipment, and good communication etiquette. Ryan stated that to have good business skills means that a musician knows how to operate finances dealing with his music and possesses legal skills to ensure that putting out music does not infringe on any copyright laws.

Becoming business savvy or preparing for any part of the music business may require musicians to engage in training or other learning opportunities. Many of the musicians discussed resources, conferences, national gatherings, and learning opportunities that have helped to shape their business sense and improve on musical abilities. Millard shared advice for musicians to take advantage of all the sources that may be helpful in reaching goals: community schools, professors' lectures, college performances, and faculty people as sources that may be able to guide musicians in learning music or preparing for performances. Gabe also recommended that if a musician is preparing for a specific career in music or a specific performance, he should employ job shadowing activities. Latrell believed that shadowing is a helpful activity to study behind a mentor and learn specific techniques. His request to the musicians he shadows is, "Teach me what you know!"

Keeping in mind the sociocultural factors that surround the business and career activity of a musician, Millard provided a reality check and piece of advice for aspiring musicians who are preparing for a career in music. He said that a part of being prepared for the music field of study and performance is to "be ready for dealing with [white people]." A strategy that he suggested in dealing with other races or ethnicities is to know the expectations. Preparing for a performance is to know what is expected of a musician's musical ability, his time, and his character. Understanding what the expectations are can help to determine how much time he needs to listen, practice, and rehearse; how to dress; what kind of equipment to bring; and what times to be available. It is also helpful to know how one performance affects the next or what opportunities can be expected from performing. Victor offered that musicians are not playing for the current performance but are thinking about the next one. Curry added, "One gig might be less than another gig and that gig that is less might bring you four more performances." Earnest

shared that he has always been willing to accept smaller performances but performed like they were major, and this is what provided him with opportunities because others remembered his performances.

The final career management behavior and consideration that the musicians suggested relates to the investment in their technology and equipment. Gabe said, “At a certain point when you become a professional musician, there's a certain level of equipment that's required. You can gig on anything but depending on what you're trying to accomplish, you may need to invest \$1000 on that amp.” According to Graydon, technology changes every six months. In fact, Gabe expressed his frustration with paying for and attending college classes: “Everything I learned to that point or did learn was obsolete. The technology just completely changed. I can't afford for this to be obsolete, and then I got to pay \$2000.” Ryan reiterated that musicians must purchase their own equipment, saying that musicians “[have to] pay for the digital electronic workstation, which we all just call it DAW. You cannot do music without technology.” Investing money in equipment and time learning how to use this equipment are ways to prepare for thriving in the music industry.

Category 5: Thriving. The top career management behaviors that indicate that a musician is thriving are related to the various occupations that musicians have experienced, the musicality and skill level of the musician, and the personal career goals or activities that musicians set out to accomplish and have achieved. Musicians shared that being a musician may lend itself to many different career paths. Curry shared the many occupations and employment experiences he was able to engage in as music director, band tutor, freelance piano teacher, contractor, producer, recording group manager, and studio owner. Ryan discussed how when he achieved a certain skill level as a trumpet player, he was able to get jobs teaching at different

high schools, band camps, and sections preparing for All Region competitions while still in college. Graydon also shared an impressive list of occupations that featured him as a director of Broadway shows, owner of a lighting company, producer, minister of music, and much more.

The majority of the musicians in this study can play or have played multiple instruments. This is an indication of thriving. The investment that it has taken at the survival, initiative, recovery, and preparation stages of the career management process to learn how to play, gaining knowledge about such instruments, gaining support, purchasing instruments and equipment, and preparing for a performance with multiple instruments speaks to the musicians' ability to thrive in the music industry. Hayward considered himself to be a triple threat in that he plays drums and organ/keys and sings. Gabe talked about how he was inspired to learn every instrument he could. When he continued to get phone calls from people looking for musicians for certain things, he taught himself to play drums, guitar, keyboard, piano, organ, flute, and accordion. After much practice and understanding the musical dynamics and their relationship to cultural considerations, Richard stated he became more textured in his musical approach. The improvement of skill and musical ability as a result of the actions that have been taken can also be a form of thriving.

One sure indication that a musician is thriving is a consistent booking of performances or career opportunities. Gabe discussed that one of the downsides of being a musician is unsteady income, which is why he decided to diversify his chances to make more money with learning multiple instruments and being willing to do things outside of music. Willow and Graydon also spoke on diversifying income sources so that there would be steady income. Being able to secure consistent performances not only helps financially but also keeps musicians active, visible to the fan base and other potential clients to expand their market, and accessible to other musicians.

When asked about the benefit of being a musician, some of the responses related to the fact that musicians can work for themselves and have control over their career movements. Some of the musicians clarified that being independent musicians can be challenging in that they have to do all the leg work of promoting and distribution, but the plus side to this is that they have ownership and control over the creative direction of their music and the profit that comes from it. Five of the musicians referenced solo projects that they have produced and released or were working on at the time of the study. Having control of their careers is the key to thriving for the musicians who sought to release solo projects.

Category 6: Tools and Resources. To become professionals, the musicians have taken advantage of the many resources and tools that have been available to them along the way through formal and informal educational experiences, conferences and trainings, government programs and resources, applications, devices, and internet tools. These sources are those that have been used at every stage of the career self-management process to prepare AA male musicians to thrive in their careers.

Formal and informal education experiences. Fourteen of the musicians have attained some level of post-secondary education, and thirteen have completed coursework or degrees in music education. Willow mentioned that college prepared him for the performance aspect of music, the language spoken in music, and music theory. Ryan also gave credit to his college experience for preparing him musically for performing in eleven ensembles while in and after college. Although it was a struggle, Max admitted that his college experience taught him much about the discipline that is required to learn music and even made him self-aware of his pride that he held on to when he refused to ask for help when studying music theory. The career paths that some of the musicians have chosen were a direct result of their college experiences; as with

Ryan, who is band director for a local middle school; Dorian, who is a sound recording and technology professor at a university; and Millard, who is a retired music instructor previously working at the same university as Dorian. These musicians appreciated their formal training in music in formal education settings as these opportunities served as resources in their careers.

An informal educational experience that was mentioned plenty of times throughout the interviews was shedding. Victor, Latrell, Max and Hayward all made comments about how shedding was a huge resource in the music culture to help musicians learn from one another. Although it is a time for musicians to show off their showmanship skills, according to Victor, it is also a time to be advised by experienced musicians. Latrell believes that shedding is a resource that could potentially bring all the musicians together to share knowledge. “Teach me what you know over here. Let’s shed about this over here. Let’s bring everybody’s knowledge together so we can be like you,” was Latrell’s response to how musicians can continue to build a sense of cohesion in the local music community.

Conferences and training experiences. As music directors for churches or teachers in secondary and post-secondary schools, the musicians provided references to many of the conferences, national gatherings, or training that they have been involved in. Willow talked about how he was able to attend workshops sponsored by the church. These resources afforded him the opportunity to accompany major artists in the gospel industry and engage in jam sessions and clinics, which Ryan mentioned is the strongest training he received. Richard has been able to attend summer conferences held by Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship International, which he said helped him to expand his musical gift. Gospel Music Workshops of America (GMWA), Auxiliaries in Ministry (AIM), and the Gospel Music Heritage workshops are reputable national gatherings that Victor mentioned as resources he has attended in order to enhance his musical

skills. For music teachers, Richard has attended the National Music Educators Conference, which helped him with techniques and classroom management to prepare children to perform. In partnership with another local musician, Hayward shared that he successfully facilitated a statewide music clinic that was open to any musician in the state.

Another major music gathering that was mentioned was the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), which is a trade show that features well-known music companies and musicians across the world. Earnest described it as a big family reunion for anyone who is professional in the music industry. Earnest made the right connections at NAMM to acquire the endorsements from Remo, Vic Firth, and Sabian Cymbals, all of which are reputable music companies that manufacture drum equipment. Latrell offered that Fender is another music company that may have avenues to product endorsements. Richard and Victor regarded NAMM as a great resource for networking and learning about the latest equipment that will be released in the future and will impact music production and performance.

Government programs and community resources. Graydon shared that grant funding is available for arts programs, designated for organizations that could acquire a building to renovate and host arts-based programming. These grants are what sparked Graydon to evaluate if he would like to undertake the goal of starting a company that develops artists. Victor also mentioned his desire to have an arts school:

My level of success is having a school of the arts. That's what I want. A school of the arts where people can learn how to sing, model, act, dance, and play instruments all in one. It's like a one big arts school.

Graydon mentioned the Arts Preservation Society as a resource that is trying to revitalize the arts in the United States and a local arts council as a resource that supports local artists and musicians. He's been able to acquire a \$4,000 grant from these sources to produce his album. As

a middle school band director, Ryan offered a resource that has afforded some of the kids at his school the opportunity to purchase instruments.

One thing that does not exist in the state but was mentioned in this study as a necessary resource for musicians is a union. Although adopted in other states, this state lacks the resource of a musician's union, which can help to establish standards across the board when it comes to musician pay scales and considerations to working with musicians.

Technology applications and devices. “Right now, the way the world is set up, [there is] no excuse. It's no excuse to not be where you want to be because knowledge is so accessible right now. It's more accessible than ever,” stated Latrell. Graydon said the internet is a wealth of knowledge because a lot of what musicians need to learn about the industry can be found on line. The internet has changed over the course of the musicians' professional careers. Willow, Earnest, Millard, Victor, and Latrell all indicated that they did not have the same opportunities to learn from the internet as the upcoming musicians do now. Every musician in the study mentioned YouTube as a source of learning because people post instructional videos about everything on YouTube. Social media sites were also mentioned by several musicians as a way to connect with their audience, network with other musicians, or find opportunities to perform. Gabe provided many references to online resources that may help musicians with communicating their services. SoundBetter and Fiverr are two online applications that he mentioned as a marketplace for musicians to provide services to people around the globe. Sonic Biz is another resource Gabe provided that helps musicians with booking performance opportunities. The band that he currently plays for was booked from Sonic Biz and he had the opportunity to perform in Brooklyn, New York.

As a performance musician, Gabe is also invested in learning the technical side of the equipment used by many of the musicians, which prompted him to pursue employment opportunities with companies like Apple. He is currently working on developing a mobile application that may help make the business of musicians easier, helping them with time management and keeping up with rehearsal schedules and performance bookings. Latrell is also working on developing an app that would allow people to request guitar accompaniment in their music in a quick turnaround time. Willow mentioned that Drop Box is another application that has made doing the business of a musician easier in that he does not have to leave his home to record his instrument. Instead, he can lay down his guitar part on top of what has been sent to him and send it back without a hassle.

One will find that many of the musicians use Apple products in their careers. Gabe claimed that Apple products were designed with the creator in mind. Apple products are reliable tools for production and performance. These devices are not cheap, however. Gabe talked about how he had to invest much money in purchasing and maintaining his Apple products, and since technology changes so much according to Graydon, Gabe has to save and invest in adapters and devices that would allow him to utilize older versions of the product until he is ready to trade or sell them. The other technology applications that were considered resourceful were music editing and production software programs mentioned by Ryan: Ableton, Logic Pro, and iREAL Pro. These programs help musicians to study chord changes and provide an understanding of how the music works.

The musicians gave credit to many resources and tools that were available to them to help prepare them for the professional level of being a musician. These resources were in the form of formal and informal education, national conferences, gatherings, training opportunities,

workshops, shedding experiences, clinics, jam sessions, government-funded grants and programs, internet tools, software programs, devices, and applications. The common thread with all of these resources is that the musicians in this study took the initiative to attend and learn from the learning experiences facilitated by these resources.

Summary

The findings in this study revealed career habits, strategies, actions, and resources that support the following career resilience and career adaptability constructs: survival, initiative, recovery, preparation, and thriving. Participating musicians shared experiences in each of the relative areas of resilience and adaptability through conversations about individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that may have influenced their careers. The individual characteristics important for AA male musicians to have are the ability to connect with people, trustworthiness, dependability, loyalty, genuineness, honesty, love, passion, and spirituality. Findings also indicate that establishing and building relationships are vital for musicians because they serve as a source of support, validation, mentorship, connection, and opportunity. Experiences that the musicians felt were significant to their career development and advancement process were accomplishments and awards, career mobility and experiences, performance opportunities, and connections. Adversities that were common among the musicians dealt with challenges working for the Black church, issues with compensation, struggles of work-life balance, and lack of cohesion among the local community.

The findings serve as a description of what AA male musicians believe are the most influential factors and strategies used to progress through the career development and advancement process. To survive in the industry, the musicians recommended that musicians invest in early learning experiences to learn how to read music, develop a future-oriented

mindset, practice and listen to all genres of music, and make connections. To take initiative in progressing as a musician, it was recommended that musicians be willing to self-evaluate, set standards and goals toward success, seek opportunities, and network. To recover from adversity, the musicians offered strategies to keep up with documentation, establish time management skills, and believe in a higher power to overcome challenges beyond their control. To prepare for career experiences, musicians recommended that AA male musicians invest time and resources in practice, rehearsal, business practices, equipment, and resources that will help musicians connect with people. Finally, as it relates to thriving, musicians indicated actions relating to diversifying their incomes, engaging in other occupations, accomplishing goals, winning awards, starting businesses, rebranding their music and artistry, attending conferences, trainings, and learning opportunities, and consistently getting performances.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusion

The African American music professional is an isolated and insular member of a community of business professionals within the larger music industry (Ferguson, 1991; George, 2003). Although many African American male musicians have thrived in the music industry, economic and sociocultural factors reveal unique challenges for African American male musicians who strive to sustain a profitable and satisfying career in music. The journey for AA males to become a professional musician is fluid and not formalized (Ferguson, 1991), causing ambiguity in the steps taken to enter this career field and sustain growth in a rapidly changing music industry. McCarthy, Brooks, Lowell, and Zakaras (2001) recognized that there is an absence of professional training opportunities that focus on enhancing employability skills for musicians in general, which contributes to the lack of support that this population experiences to overcome obstacles to career development and advancement in an unstructured workforce.

AA male musicians who consider themselves professionals are at risk for high unemployment rates and instability in the workforce without proper training in, guidance toward, and access to best practices. Based on previous research (Artazcoz, Benach, Borrell, & Cortes, 2004; Bartley, 1994; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999), unemployment has been linked to a host of negative outcomes such as poverty, poor mental health, stress, and harmful health behaviors. The bigger picture for the African American community is that the negative outcomes of unemployment can potentially create an economic issue that perpetuates a long-standing history of poverty and oppression for AA males.

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that impact career resilience and adaptability during career development and advancement for independent AA male musicians

who work in a free agency workforce. The study explored resilience and adaptability constructs such as survival, initiative, recovery, preparation, and thriving through a conceptual filter that sifted through individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that may influence the growth and advancement of the AA male music careers. The focal point of this study was to identify career self-management strategies, actions, habits, and external resources that AA male musicians believe are crucial to survive, take initiative, recover from challenges, prepare for success, and thrive on their career development and advancement journey in the music industry.

This chapter provides a summary of the findings outlined in Chapter 4 and presents the connections between the findings, the literature, and the theoretical frameworks that guided this study. Additionally, this chapter offers recommendations for future research and implications for human resources practitioners or career counselors and Black churches who hire AA male musicians.

Summary of Findings

The findings in this study revealed career habits, strategies, actions, and resources that support the following constructs as outlined by the career resilience theory and career adaptability theory: survival, initiative, recovery, preparation, and thriving. Career resilience theory describes three stages (survival, recovery, and thriving) that a person must progress through to build or demonstrate resilience. Musicians in this study professed career self-management behaviors that they have used at each stage to develop and advance in their careers. To survive in the industry, the musicians recommended investing in early learning experiences to learn how to read music, develop a future-oriented mindset, practice and listen to all genres of music, and make connections. To recover from adversity, the musicians offered strategies to keep up with documentation, establish time management skills, and believe in a higher power to

overcome challenges beyond their control. As it relates to thriving, the AA male musicians indicated actions relating to diversifying their incomes, engaging in other occupations, accomplishing goals, winning awards, starting businesses, rebranding their music and artistry, attending conferences, trainings, and learning opportunities, and consistently obtaining performances.

Career adaptability theory suggested that taking initiative and preparing for unpredictable opportunities are two areas of readiness to evaluate one's ability to cope with changes and challenges that may occur in his career. To take initiative in progressing as a musician, it was recommended that AA male musicians be willing to self-evaluate, set standards and goals toward success, seek opportunities, and network. To prepare for career experiences, musicians recommended that AA male musicians invest time and resources in practice, rehearsal, learning business practices, equipment, and resources that will help musicians connect with people.

In order to arrive at these findings, the research allowed the tenets of the African American Male Theory (AAMT) to undergird the contextual understanding of how and why AA male musicians employ certain career decisions and self-management behaviors in the music industry. As AAMT proposed, career decisions for these musicians occurred in multidimensional environments, which required the researcher to attend to elements such as individual character, career motivation, family influences, interpersonal relationships, cultural considerations, and comparisons with other musicians of variant ethnic or gender backgrounds to understand career development through the complexity of the AA male experience.

Research Questions Discussion

Research Question 1:

What do independent African American male musicians perceive to be key factors in career development and advancement that impact their music careers?

The key factors that the musicians believed impact career development and advancement were related to individual character traits and personal qualities, interpersonal relationships with people who support, mentor, and connect them to opportunities, and sociocultural factors that reveal aspects of their early experiences and the culture of environments in which they thrive as musicians, such as the church, the local music scene, and the music industry.

1(a). What are the individual factors that influence career advancement for African American male musicians?

The AA male musicians offered many individual factors that aided in establishing career identity, self-efficacy, social capital, opportunity, and support on their career development and advancement journey. Specifically, individual traits and personal qualities that are necessary are being trustworthy, personable, dependable, loyal, genuine, honest, lovable, passionate, and ambitious, as well as having the ability to connect with others. A musician's responsibility, the role of spirituality in career development, the ability to spiritually connect with others through music, and musical giftedness were individual factors that influenced AA male musicians' career advancement. The difference between the role of spirituality and spiritual connectedness is that the role of spirituality deals with the reliance on a higher power to establish and manage circumstances and career experiences beyond the musician's control. Spiritual connectedness refers to a musician's ability to musically align with the spirits of others to communicate without verbal or nonverbal cues during performances in order to elicit a response.

1(b). How do these individual factors impact career advancement?

The musicians recognized that their belief in a higher power (spirituality), spiritual connectedness, and musical giftedness were all necessary individual factors that helped to shape self-efficacy, career identity, and the ability to spiritually connect with others through music. As a result of experiencing adversities and successes, the musicians emphasized that these personal attributes and individual factors served as a foundation for building confidence in their craft, fruitful relationships in their career, and motivation to continue to pursue more in the music profession.

1(c) Which interpersonal factors influence how African American male musicians interact and socialize with their environment to shape their career behaviors?

Fruitful relationships are the most important interpersonal factor that influences the career development and advancement process of AA male musicians. Findings in this study indicated that family influences, mentoring relationships, musician peer relationships, and personal relationships with romantic partners, church members, fraternities, and audience members are important relationships for musicians. The dynamics in these relationships highlighted that the AA male musicians were supported, well-connected, and capable of career mobility.

1(d) How do these interpersonal factors impact career development?

The musicians reported that establishing and building relationships is vital for AA male musicians because relationships serve as a source of support, validation, mentorship, connection, opportunity, and referrals for music jobs, building a musician's reputation and helping with the recognition of his talents. Relationships with romantic partners was mentioned as the only support system that some of the musicians had. Mentorship that occurred in the lives of the AA

male musicians in the study served as a source to build confidence, self-efficacy, and career identity. Even the relationships with people outside the field of music such as fraternity brothers, church members, or fans were influential in connecting musicians with work opportunities that support their music goals.

1(e). What are the sociocultural factors that play a role in career advancement for African American male musicians?

The sociocultural factors that play a significant role in career advancement for AA male musicians were described through narratives about early experiences and family structures, cultural considerations, local and industry culture, and economic considerations. Musicians emphasized the importance of geographical location and the music culture that may exist there, as it is different in every city. Additionally, the AA male musicians acknowledged that racism and discrimination were not normal sociocultural factors that shaped their experiences, with the exception of two musicians: 1) Millard, whose career spanned a time of racial tension and segregation in the United States, and 2) Gabe, who was not chosen to perform because the venue requested a White band. Although these two exceptions are significant in their careers, they both mentioned that discrimination had no bearing on their success. Musicians also indicated that they believe playing for a church is important in helping AA male musicians through informal training as it allows them to have opportunities to play and perform in the church, but they also offered adversities presented in Black churches that influenced their career attitudes and behaviors.

1(f). How do these sociocultural factors play a role in career advancement?

These sociocultural factors provided context to the types of experiences that musicians are resilient in or adapt to in their career and ultimately play a role in the musicians' career

advancement in two ways: 1) These factors shape the musicians' perceptions about what is expected or required of them to advance in their careers in church environments, local music scenes, or throughout the music industry, and 2) these factors impact how musicians identify, acquire, and access resources that are available to them (such as training, academic support, organizations, funding sources, software) to advance in their careers.

2) How do independent African American male musicians persist through challenges that may affect career development and advancement?

Through describing their career actions, thoughts about career habits, and behaviors, the musicians implied that certain career management behaviors related to resilience and adaptability affected their career development and advancement journey. To survive in the industry, the musicians recommended that AA male musicians be invested in their early learning experiences to learn how to read music, develop a future-oriented mindset, practice and listen to all genres of music, and make connections. Another successful strategy that these musicians used related to self-evaluation, setting standards and goals toward success, seeking opportunities, and networking.

To recover from adversity, the musicians endorsed keeping up with documentation, establishing time management skills, and believing in a higher power to overcome challenges. The musicians demonstrated that their investment in time and resources in practice, rehearsals, learning business practices, and having the right equipment and resources has helped them make connections with other musicians that resulted in their career development and advancement. Finally, as it relates to thriving, the musicians indicated actions relating to diversifying their incomes, having multiple income streams, engaging in other occupations, accomplishing goals, winning awards, starting businesses, rebranding their music and artistry, attending conferences,

trainings, and learning opportunities, and consistently getting performances helped them to overcome challenges and persist through their music careers.

2(a). What are the major challenges that affect career development and advancement?

The AA male musicians in this study indicated that the major challenges that affect career development and advancement relate to: 1) lack of performance standards that can define levels of knowledge, musical skills, and abilities for independent AA male musicians who do not have formal educational training or a degree from an accredited college; 2) lack of responsibility on the part of the Black church to support the growth and development of AA male musicians; 3) struggles of working for Black churches and issues with adequate compensation from the Black church; 4) a lack of time and balance; 5) the absence of cohesion among the local musicians; and 6) changes and innovations in technology.

Additionally, when asked if there were any areas of their professional careers where they may need help or training, a frequent response was “filing taxes.” This comment indicates a major problem that affects their career advancement relative to obtaining deductions that they are entitled to as professional musicians.

2(b). How do challenges affect career development and advancement for African American male musicians?

Challenges discussed by musicians impacted career development and advancement in ways that make it difficult for musicians to establish a strong identity in their profession and gain support and training around their craft. Without a set of standards coupled with not feeling valued and being undercompensated for work, a musician: 1) does not have a way to evaluate performance levels, necessary skills, or abilities that he possesses or needs; 2) is not guided about what needs to be done, what resources are available, or how to attain these levels of

performances in order to develop necessary career habits or make career decisions; 3) creates negative career attitudes that do not yield productivity and commitment to the profession; and 4) lacks resources to make investments or purchases necessary to sustain viability in the business. Since many musicians must rely on their own self-management behaviors to balance time, manage finances, seek training, and establish relationships, it becomes difficult to effectively develop and advance in their careers without the support of other musicians, adequate pay and equitable practices of the Black church, and access to training where musicians can learn how to adapt to new technologies and learn performance expectations in the industry.

2(c). Which tactics related to survival and recovery has helped African American male musicians to thrive in the music industry?

To survive the music industry, AA male musicians indicated survival strategies related to the musician's faith in God and the belief that there is a higher source which helps to establish motivation, endurance, and relationship building for career movement. Willow, Richard, and Victor all referenced prayer as a strategy and technique that they employ to build their faith and dependence on God. Other survival tactics relate to adopting self-efficacy thoughts and behaviors; engaging in education to learn how to read music and music theory; building personal character traits such as humility, genuineness, trustworthiness, honesty, and a future-oriented mindset; practicing and listening to all genres and styles of music; making connections with people to establish supportive relationships by being personable and building a good reputation; and marketing themselves on social media and using mobile applications, devices, websites, hashtags, and algorithms used to increase performance opportunities.

Additionally, compensation was a topic that every musician in the study discussed. As a result, some of the musicians recommended that musicians document everything by saving all

the receipts that connect to purchases for equipment purchases, cleaning bills, mileage, fuel, materials used, clothes, haircuts, and anything else that a musician may purchase, which will be useful when filing taxes. To address the challenges with work-life balance, the AA male musicians provided their use of time-management strategies, such as scheduling rehearsals and performances during particular days and times that do not conflict with obligations. During the recovery process, the musicians in this study also offered that re-evaluating intentions, motivation, and goals to determine next steps after adversity as well as strengthening faith in a higher power, helped them to overcome situations and circumstances that were beyond their control.

2(d). What strategies are used to prepare for changes that may occur on the job?

To prepare for change that may occur in their careers, AA male musicians recommended the following strategies: 1) invest time practicing, rehearsing, and performing music; 2) learn and employ business practices; 3) seek resources that help to increase cultural competence; 4) invest in equipment and technology that will be necessary to complete the job; 5) seek and engage in formal and informal learning experiences and training through national conferences, musician gatherings, workshops, shedding experiences, clinics, and jam sessions; and 6) constantly educate self and others on the resources such government-funded grants and programs, internet tools, software programs, devices, and applications that are available to musicians to thrive.

Connection to Literature

The basis of this study focused on influences of individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that yielded significant experiences, adverse circumstances, and work conditions in the environments where independent AA male musicians thrive. By carefully exploring the perceptions, thoughts, and career self-management behaviors of independent AA

male musicians that support resiliency and adaptability, this research study offered evidence that supports the literature in areas related to the structural framework of the music industry, factors that contribute to the career development and advancement of musicians, the employment landscape for AA male musicians, and the theoretical support that undergirded the study. The findings in this research were aligned with most of the literature presented. Areas where there were discrepancies are noted.

Structural Framework of the Music Industry

The music industry is designed to generate profit from the skills, talents, and unique musical giftedness of artists, musicians, and creative professionals. Stein and Evans (2009) defined the music industry as the “business of recording, publishing, distributing and marketing recorded music” (p. 96). Based on the occupations, accomplishments, and career experiences shared by the AA male musicians in this study, many of the participants indicated experiences in each area mentioned by Stein and Evans. Considering Barner’s (1994) description of the employee-base structure in a free agency workforce, which includes core employees, supplemental employees, and outsourced work entities, the AA male musicians in this study have all operated in one or all of the employee-base structure of a free agency workforce as core employees of the church, contracted musicians who are retained for temporary services, or hired musicians for specific events, performances, or services by independent entities or people.

Some of the factors that influenced change in the music industry were an influx of independent record labels, technology advances, and file sharing (Sen, 2010; Spotts, 2010; Suhr, 2012). The literature posited that these changes have implications for the work conditions, skill set, and knowledge the musician will need to thrive in the workforce. These changes were referenced in this study by musicians when they discussed the tasks behind producing solo album

projects they have released without major record label influence; the use of technology resources they had to learn and embrace in order to produce, publish, and distribute music as free agents; and learning new methods to communicate, record, and share music with DropBox and mobile applications. Some of these implications were relative to the flexibility in the lifestyle of free agents (Lincoln & Raftery, 2011), the ability to work with others in other occupations (Beeching, 2005; Feder, 1984; Kirschbaum, 2007), and career goals that do not lead to working for a record label (Stein & Evans, 2009). Considering that the AA male musicians mentioned flexibility as one of the upsides of their music careers in that they are able to engage in other occupations and career experiences that support their career goals, the findings support the implications derived from the literature.

Factors Contributing to Career Development and Advancement

Factors that contribute to career development and advancement for musicians presented in the literature related to the individual factors, interpersonal and social factors, and environmental and economic influences that shape their career experiences. Details about each factor pointed out in the literature are compared to the factors presented in this research.

Individual factors. MacNamara, Holmes, and Collins (2006) reported that natural ability, dedication, self-belief, planning, adaptation, willingness to learn, and determination are a few of the personal factors that contribute to enhancing and advancing a career in music. Jaap (2014) also reported that a musician's passion, drive, and self-efficacy play an important role in overcoming unexpected experiences, searching for business opportunities, and adapting to changes that may occur in career development and in the advancement process. AA male musicians mentioned that in order to survive in the industry, there are individual characteristics that an AA male musician must possess; these characteristics align with the personal and

interpersonal skills mentioned in the literature such as willingness to learn, self-efficacy, passion, self-belief, natural ability (labeled musical giftedness in the study), and planning (MacNamara, Holmes & Collins, 2006).

Interpersonal and social factors. In terms of the social factors that contribute to the career development and advancement of musicians, Cutler (2010) asserted that interpersonal skills are by far the most significant skills musicians can possess, just as important as musical ability in most cases. Attitudes such as positivity, loyalty, optimism, and charisma help to foster harmonious interactions between musicians and their co-workers, employers, venue owners, supporters, mentors, and caretakers. In addition to these attitudes, Lewis and Oney (2014) offered that musicians must be able to work well with others because the relationships that musicians form within and outside the business are catalysts for cultivating opportunities and support (Johnsson & Hager, 2008). The findings yield evidence that supports the literature considering that all the AA male musicians mentioned various relationships with family members, band directors, mentors, spouses, other musicians, church members, and fraternity brothers who have influenced their career development and advancement in some form or fashion. The musicians made references to the validation, support, and opportunity that have come from these relationships, but also shared that to establish these relationships they had to be personable, loyal, and cooperative in some cases, which also aligns with the literature.

Environmental factors, employment considerations, and economic influences. The literature regarding economic influences surrounding career development and advancement for musicians pointed out that musicians must be aware of the trends driven by the current consumer climate (Beeching, 2005; Feder, 1984), newly rising technologies (Andersen, 2010; Sen, 2010; Spotts, 2010; Wueller, 2013), and innovative approaches to branding as a musician (Music

Trades Magazine, 2013). The AA male musicians demonstrated their awareness of these elements by mentioning strategies and tactics used to market themselves on social media such as the use of mobile applications, devices, websites, hashtags, and algorithms and the improvements to the aesthetics of a performance through visual components.

The literature also referenced the need for musicians to be able to recognize and create performance opportunities which may include volunteer experiences and sporadic opportunities that expose the work of a musician to different demographics and markets of people (Beeching, 2005; Weissman, 1979). “Meta-capabilities,” defined by Bartleet et al. (2012) as skills relative to disciplinary agility, social networking capability, creative enterprise, and career-self marketing are other employability skills that allow musicians to thrive in other industries. Beeching (2005) recognized these skills as negotiation skills, time-management skills, budgeting and financing skills, teaching skills, and presentation skills, all of which are self-management behaviors that were mentioned by AA male musicians in the study.

Training and organization support. To cultivate the necessary skills, career self-management behaviors and resources that musicians believe are necessary to succeed, the literature revealed that learning experience outside of a classroom structure are beneficial (Jaap, 2011; Lacaille, Koestner & Gaudreau, 2007). Ragsdale (2009) and Uscher (1999) offered that performing arts programs, small artist-driven companies, and nonprofit organizations are viable resources that may provide creative learning and training opportunities. The research supports the literature in that the resources and training opportunities that were available to musicians in the study were indeed offered by entities that fit that description. Musicians mentioned attending workshops and clinics held by church organizations, participating in conferences that were

sponsored by national agencies and institutions that support the arts, and receiving funding from nonprofits that specifically fund art-related activities.

Employment Landscape for AA Male Musicians

Employment information presented by musicians verified that the majority of the participants were engaged in employment activities outside of music. These activities served as supplemental income and may require skills outside of musical ability, which affirms the literature that many musicians search for supplemental work opportunities (Bennett, 2008) to secure financial stability in their careers. Diversifying streams of income was one of the career self-management behaviors offered by the musicians as a way to recover from adversity. Additionally, the literature review revealed that many of the AA males who are employed in the United States work in production, transportation, material moving occupations, utilities, and public administration (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). The musicians in this study presented a slightly different reality in that the majority of their supplemental income has been in retail, education, and entrepreneurship.

In terms of career barriers, the literature review discussed the impact of geographical location and community conditions on finding suitable employment. The literature approached employment barriers through the lens of poverty, suggesting that poverty-stricken neighborhoods have implications for education quality, health, and economic opportunities (i.e., lack of sufficient academic achievement resources, positive role models, employment opportunities, and access to affordable and healthy foods). Although few of the musician grew up under adverse or poverty-stricken conditions, poverty or lack of resources did not hinder them from advancing in their music profession. In the cases when geographical location and community conditions were discussed by musicians in this study, they focused more on the importance of understanding the

different requirements and expectations of music in different geographical locations and communities. Musicians implied that if a musician is not prepared, capable, or knowledgeable about the music culture in a different geographic location, he will have a hard time finding or keeping musical employment.

Another career barrier that was explained in the literature and confirmed in the study had much to do with a misconception of the musician's career identity. Bennett (2008) explained that barriers are dilemmas that occur in a musician's environment. One dilemma that Victor, Hayward, and Max referenced in this study is the misconception that the sole duty of a musician is to perform, disregarding the other job tasks that are involved in preparing for performances and engaging in other music-related activities as a part of the profession. Many of the musicians must engage in a diverse range of activities to support career development and advancement beyond simply performing, as pointed out in the literature.

The final career barrier deals with a cultural dilemma. R. Pleasant (personal communication, July 17, 2015), a local AA male musician, affirmed that it is normal for church culture to shun musicians who play in other arenas outside of gospel or the church walls. This data shared in the literature review aligns with a few of the experiences shared by Curry and Graydon as they mentioned that church leadership and congregation members do not always support church musicians performing in local secular venues. Additionally, the literature offered that older generations in the Black church believe that the gift of music is from God and does not need "nurturing," which helps to build reluctance around the idea that musicianship is a viable profession. This implication is supported by the narrative of the musicians who spoke about the difficulty of feeling valued by church leadership who do not compensate or regard musicianship as a real profession.

There were a few instances in the literature that related to the musicians' work and learning environments that conflicted with the findings of this research. These instances can be found in literature that spoke to the limitations of traditional institutions, or lack of access to adequate training, the value of musicians in Black churches, and career barriers for AA males. First, the literature suggested that traditional institutional settings are limited to focusing on technical skills and the musical development of the musician in a particular genre or style of music (Hager & Johnsson, 2008, 2009). These researchers questioned whether or not music schools can offer the type of learning experiences and training imperative for music students to become prepared for a viable career as musicians. Based on the fact that thirteen of the musicians in the study attended some level of formal training in music at traditional institutions and claimed that these experiences were significant to their development, the findings in this research challenge the literature, suggesting that formal training at traditional institutions may indeed offer learning experiences that prepare musicians for career viability.

Second, the literature pointed out that musicians who perform for Black churches are considered essential to worship services (Jackson, 1988; Weekes, 2005). Although musicians in this study would agree that they are assets to the church service, the tensions between the literature and the findings of this study are highlighted in the participants' feedback. They believed they are regarded less or negatively in the Black church – not viewed as assets but as “disposable paper towels” as claimed by Graydon.

Finally, the literature discussed racial discrimination in the music business as a career barrier for musicians (Ferguson, 1991). Although there was one experience shared by Gabe that indicated that his race was a factor of not getting a performance opportunity, no musician in this study said that his career development and advancement was hindered by racial discrimination.

However, this reality may be different for musicians who are not performing for majority Black audiences. Since the musicians in this study found more frequent opportunities to perform in misogynist spaces with audiences that have similar racial or ethnic backgrounds, it is likely that they are protected from racial discriminations or negative experiences related to race that hindered career development and advancement.

Theoretical Support of Career Theories and AA Male Theory

Career Development Theories. The literature outlined career development theories that researchers have used to explain phenomena that occur in career and workforce development. Among these clusters of career development theories, situational and sociological theories best describe how factors related to the individual's history, cultural influences, and economic and social experiences impact career decision making (Zaccaria, 1970). Situational and sociological career development theories take into consideration the individual's social groups, geographical settings, and historical events as important areas to study for context. The musicians in this study supported this statement by saying that the researcher would receive different responses if the study were conducted with musicians who may live in different geographical areas, suggesting that the culture and expectations differ in other locations. It was evident that the musicians' social groups through their musical and family influences were key to understanding how they formed career attitudes, support, and resources on their career development and advancement journeys. The data also mirrored the literature by exposing that economic factors such as compensation, financial motivation, and poverty impacted career decisions and mobility.

Career resilience and career adaptability. The literature review outlined Career Resilience Theory (CRT) and Career Adaptability Theory (CAT) by providing details about how these theories support career self-management. Arora and Rangnekar (2014) explained that CRT

proposes that individuals who possess resilience are able to overcome career barriers that may threaten their achievement, self-confidence, work ethic, willingness or ability to take risk, and the ability to act independently and cooperatively. Additionally, Benard (1991) offered a description of an individual who possesses career resilience, which included traits of being socially competent, autonomous and having a strong sense of purpose and belief in the goal-oriented future as seen through a person's faith, optimism, and spiritual connectedness. Considering this explanation and description, this theory accurately describes how musicians are able to develop and advance their careers in the face of adverse circumstance. Musicians shared individual factors related to personal characteristics that mimic the description in the literature of individuals who exhibit career resilience: understanding how to deal with people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds, developing self-confidence and self-efficacy behaviors, and having a strong belief in a higher power who orchestrates support, resources and opportunities beyond the control of the musician.

CAT explains how individuals who engage in career adaptability undertake intentional efforts to making career decisions that are more suitable and congruent with life's demand (Goodman, 1994). The musicians who discussed their decision to retire to spend more time writing and arranging music, or accept a severance package to move away from corporate employment to pursue music full time, or work in technology retail stores to have influence on product development that will impact musicians all exemplified career adaptability. Each one of these musicians made an intentional decision that impacted career mobility or would influence career advancement. Savickas (1997) referenced that adaptation is the result of one's relationship with the environment and adaptation speaks to how one chooses to interact within in order to survive. The key to adaptation is survival, and in the context of this study, survival for AA male

musicians at the very least means to stay relevant, equipped with skill and social capital, and be able to book performances. As the musicians described many career self-management behaviors that they have utilized to take initiative or prepare for career experiences, it was evident that they evaluated opportunities, circumstances, or resources in their environment to help them decide how to diversify income, build relationships, or book more performances.

CRT and CAT served as a foundation for understanding how to interpret the career self-management behaviors that musicians execute to overcome hardships or to prepare for career experiences that may occur. Understanding the difference between the two theories, (CRT applies to career decisions or behaviors employed after hardship while CAT identifies the career attitude and intentional efforts employed before or in preparation of career experiences) helped the researcher to accurately interpret musicians' career strategies, habits, and actions and categorize them based on these career resilience and adaptability constructs: survival, initiative, recovery, preparation, and thriving.

African American Male Theory. Along with CRT and CAT, Bush and Bush (2013) introduced African American Male Theory (AAMT) as another theory to understand the phenomena surrounding the AA male experience and their ability to demonstrate resilience. AAMT served as a theoretical backing to explain the importance of exploring multidimensional environments (such as the family life, church culture, local and industry culture, and economic climate that may be impacted by racial discrimination) that AA male musicians interact in to accurately identify the factors that influence their career behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. Bush and Bush warned researchers that when exploring elements of the AA male experience, one must consider unique contextual considerations that help explain why and how AA males interact the way they do in certain experiences. These considerations required the

researcher in this study to explore details about the musician's inner microsystem (such as the individual factors that build the moral fabric, belief system, perceptions, and innate abilities of the musicians), his outer microsystem (such as the interpersonal and sociocultural factors that identify early experiences, family influences, church culture, local music scene), and his subculture (such as supernatural and spiritual elements and collective will) to get a complete picture of how and why musicians decide to develop and advance in their careers when adversity or opportunity presents itself.

One of the six tenets of AAMT highlights that AA males are resilient and resistant. The data aligned with this tenet in that every musician who had experienced traumatic or adverse events in his personal or professional careers yet still thrived in the music business even through times of racial discrimination, segregation, and mistreatment. Another tenet of AAMT deals with how African culture, consciousness, and biology impacts the AA male experience. This tenet helped to explain the importance of the connection between a musician's career identity, his responsibility in music to carry on a legacy, and African culture and tradition. There were a few comments from the musicians that gave credit to African culture for: 1) being at the root of many of the popular genres of music, 2) projecting a flashy persona during performances, and 3) incorporating musical performances in many aspects of life and celebration. Musicians explained how these truths influenced their disdain for popular music of today's generation (as it lacks depth and appreciation for musicianship) and ignites in them a sense of obligation to impress upon the next generation of musicians to keep the African musical heritage, tradition, and legacy alive. In essence, their African heritage provided musicians with purpose, a sense of identity and integrity in music, and the responsibility to mentor, all of which make African culture a relevant topic to explore to understand the AA male experience (Bush & Bush, 2013).

Connection to Framework

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (VST) is a useful theory grounded in a constructivist paradigm to explain human development that occurs in the web of thinking, learning, and interacting within the given environment. Guba and Lincoln (1998) explained that constructivists believe that multiple realities are formed through intangible constructions of individuals, which may be different for each person. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that individuals do not learn and develop without interacting with factors in the environment. Instead, knowledge is constructed by the individual's experiences within social contexts that occur within different settings. Thus, the social settings and environments where learning and development occur are important factors to explore. The theory takes into consideration three factorial categories: individual factors, environmental factors (related to culture and history), and interpersonal factors. VST suggests that when exploring these factors, one will be able to a) identify unique characteristics of individuals and how these characteristics influence development; b) expose the dynamic nature of an individual's immediate environment; and c) articulate the importance of understanding the relationship between the individual and his or her environment to determine stages of human development.

VST was used as the conceptual framework of this study not only to guide the structure of inquiry but also to understand why it is important to explore the different environments that helped to shape the musicians' mindsets, philosophies, thoughts about career habits, and career attitudes. Considering that the three factors the theory recommends researchers to explore are individual, interpersonal, and environmental, the researcher used these factors to represent etic categories during the data analysis process. Keeping in mind the implication of VST that

attending to the relationship between the musician and his environments or social contexts may potentially yield rich data, the researcher inquired about early experiences, family influences, the structure of their family, thoughts or advice for aspiring musicians, career experiences in comparison to other ethnic groups or genders, conversations with employers, or details about stories that mentioned. Although these topics might not speak directly to career development and advancement, they indeed add context to the kind of interactions that help tell a full story about why a musician decides to employ certain career decisions and behaviors to develop or advance.

Career Construction Theory

Career Construction Theory (CCT) served as the theoretical framework. CCT is a career development theory that takes into consideration three systems of influence in the career development process: the individual system (intrapersonal variables), the social system (interpersonal variables), and the environmental-societal system (culture, historical, and socioeconomic variables) (Watson, 2013). CCT acknowledges the importance of developmental, motivational, and contextual issues that are involved in the process of career decision making. CCT recognizes that an individual's work occurs within human life structure where people enact social roles (Hartung & Taber, 2008). Considering this, CCT attends to how variables such as age, sex, gender, and social class may affect investment and involvement in social roles and how the relative roles in family, play, community, school, work, and other domains of experience that individuals are involved in shape their development.

CCT has a strong relationship with VST in that "career construction theory adheres to the epistemological constructivism that says we construct representations of reality" (Savickas, 2002, p. 154). Both theories suggest that research is conducted using person-centered methods that reveal recurring phrases, thoughts, and words that can be organized into themes that speak to

a person's interests, personality traits, self-concepts, and interactions in his or her environment. Considering this, some of emic codes that developed in this study revealed personal philosophies, career mindsets, thoughts about careers, and words or lingo that the researcher was not familiar with. Based on the four keystones of CCT summarized by Hartung and Taber (2008), the researcher focused on the life structures, strategies, stories and narratives, and personal styles of the AA male musicians to understand their experiences, perceptions, and career self-management behaviors. Watson (2013) noted that adaptability is a construct within CCT that explores how an individual operates within macro contextual settings, highlighting how individuals prepare for experiences that may arise in their careers. Since adaptability strategies are constructed with consideration to attitudes, beliefs, and competencies of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012; Hartung & Taber, 2008;), utilizing career construction theory as a theoretical framework informed the researcher as to how to approach inquiry about the meaningful experiences, circumstances, and adversities shared by the participants and the motivation, decisions, and personal constructs that supported their navigation through these experiences.

Contributions of the Conceptual & Theoretical Framework

Both the VST and CCT added value to the data collection and data analysis process of this research. CCT was a suitable theoretical framework to guide the researcher in a) constructing interview questions that were aligned with the factors outlined by VST; b) considering definitive career self-management behaviors related to developing and advancing a musician's career; and c) analyzing the perspective of meanings formulated by the relationships that have impacted the career development and advancement process for AA male musicians. Using VST as a conceptual framework justified the researcher's use of structural, process, and

pattern coding to analyze and compare unique perspectives about the individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that AA male musicians believe impact their career development and advancement. In addition to these factors, the use of VST prompted the researcher to develop etic codes that categorized significant and adverse events, economic factors, participants' thoughts about career habits and strategies, actual career habits employed, and resources and tools used to develop and advance their careers.

As a result of the utility of CCT and VST, AA male musicians in the study proposed specific personal qualities, characteristics, considerations, and career self-management behaviors that outline who a musician needs to be and what he needs to do to establish and maintain viability in his career. CCT and VST helped the researcher understand the value of exploring the connections between the musicians' personal lives, work settings, learning experiences, and local cultures to identify contextual factors and experiences that may impact their economic health and ability to be resilient and adaptable in their careers. Both frameworks complemented each other in that the theoretical frameworks positioned the study to make sense of the data collected with regard to how and why African American males build their careers through resilience and adaptability while the conceptual framework provided conceptual boundaries as to what components should be considered when seeking to understand how AA male musicians survive, take initiative, recover, prepare, and thrive on their career development and advancement journey.

Implications and Recommendations

The research contributes to an understanding of the career development and advancement of African American male musicians. Based on the musicians' perspectives of the individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors and career self-management behaviors that impact career

resilience and adaptability, the researcher was able to identify implications and recommendations for practice, research, and policy. A discussion follows of each of the themes that materialized from the study.

Theme 1: Individual Factors

Implications and recommendations for practice. The path to becoming successful in the music industry was different and unique for each musician. The varying responses to the meaning of success suggest that AA male musicians must determine their own meaning of success and evaluate what areas in their personal character, spiritual beliefs, or individual attributes already exist that can add value to the pursuit of success. Additionally, AA male musicians must also evaluate which personal characteristics and individual attributes they do not possess but are necessary within their career experience and work environments. The research also implied that faith and belief in a spiritual source is imperative for overcoming adversity. It is recommended that AA male musicians adopt spiritual practices or strategies that can aid in establishing a firm belief in a higher source.

As the musicians' careers in this study were heavily dependent on musical ability, their career habits implied that AA male musicians should establish non-negotiable practice times and methods that would allow them to focus on technique, musicality, and showmanship. Musicians emphasized the need to always practice, which implies that practice is a constant and consistent activity that determines preparedness and performance capabilities. The recommendation is to invest in learning experiences at the point of curiosity to explore different instruments and learn music theory. Considering that all the musicians mentioned reading music as a key component to professional advancement as well as learning to play different styles of music, it is recommended

that musicians learn to play jazz music as the difficulty and intricacies in jazz music helps to build skill and musical ability that can transfer to performing all genres of music.

Another recommendation is for AA male musicians to set personal goals and standards as the research implies that persistence and prosperity in career experiences depend on AA male musicians knowing what they want to accomplish, what they are willing to invest to achieve those goals, and what they are willing to accept in the process. Setting pay rates is an example of a strategy that is recommended for AA male musicians to employ while being flexible and willing to engage in experiences that may have different returns on investment besides compensation. Making career decisions about personal obligations, outside career experiences, and the equipment and resources necessary to thrive in music should also be evaluated while setting personal goals and standards.

Based on the ambiguity around specific steps that AA male musicians should take to strengthen resilience and adaptability in their careers, it is recommended that career counseling professionals, private consultants, career coaches, or nonprofit arts-based organizations who help to guide musicians in personal and professional development utilize resources, tools, and strategies that are unique to experiences of AA males. The literature review revealed that there is not much research in career counseling that is specific to the AA male experience (especially in fields of performing arts, music, or entertainment). Considering the importance of unique contextual factors of the AA male experience as posited by AAMT, it is recommended that practitioners in HRD develop a career self-management model that outlines the resilience and adaptability constructs with considerations to the AA male experience. These constructs could be used as training tools to assist aspiring AA male musicians in assessing, developing, strengthening, and evaluating what self-management behaviors are necessary to attain for career

development and advancement. By developing and using a career self-management model specific to the AA male experience, career counselors, life coaches, churches, employment agencies, or any entity that provides counseling to musicians who are not having success with attaining performance opportunities can help determine which resilience or adaptability constructs the musician should focus on and which strategies to employ within the respective constructs to increase potential and opportunities to attain performances.

Implications and recommendations for research. Findings within Theme 1 revealed specific personal qualities and characteristics that are important for AA male musicians to thrive in the music industry. However, this research was limited to AA male musicians who are employed in a metropolitan area. As many of the musicians implied that geographical location makes a difference to what is expected within the music culture of that location, it is recommended that further research be conducted to explore if specific personal qualities and characteristics are necessary for AA male musicians to thrive in locations that are more or less saturated with music opportunities. This would help to determine if the individual factors in this study are in fact applicable to AA male musicians regardless of location and geographical boundaries.

Implications and recommendations for policy. Based on the implication that musicians should evaluate areas of their personal beliefs, character traits, and attributes to determine areas that may need to be developed or strengthened, it is recommended that churches, arts-based programs, or venues that provide long-term employment to musicians as well as high schools, band camps, ensembles, higher education institutions or degree programs administer self-assessments periodically to help musicians identify their strengths, weaknesses, career goals and desires, personality traits, preferences, and resources that are available to them and revisit these

assessments to indicate improvements. For instance, the National Center for O*NET Development (2019) offers a report that outlines a summary of the kinds of tasks, technology skills, knowledge, personal skills and abilities, work activities, and considerations to context of the work environments that musicians may use to find employment. This tool can be used to cross examine areas musicians may need to improve or consider as they develop career self-management behaviors. These kinds of assessments and reports can be used by career counselors and private practice consultants who have a vested interest in supporting musicians' career development to determine areas where musicians may need support, intentional learning experiences, or assistance to thrive in their careers.

Theme 2: Interpersonal Factors

Implications and recommendations for practice. One of the adversities that was consistently mentioned in this study was the lack of cohesiveness surrounding the AA male musician community. Although the responses of the musicians implied that the local music scene is small considering that all the musicians in the study were connected in some form, it is recommended that AA male musicians engage in intentional events or activities such as shedding that support the interactions between seasoned and novice musicians. These experiences should be planned and accessible to musicians and scheduled on a day and time that is conducive to the schedule of working church musicians.

AA male musicians were clear that becoming more business savvy was helpful to establishing profitable relationships with people in the industry and in their support systems. It is recommended that musicians explore training opportunities that are specifically designed to assist with strengthening business skills in the music industry. To continue to gain social capital and support from new audiences or potential fans, it is recommended that musicians determine a

certain number of performances they are willing to perform for free within a set time span and at a new venue and provide product, branding materials, or contacts at those performances that can increase visibility

Implications and recommendations for research. Further examination into the different types and the development of musician mentoring programs can support the success of AA male musicians. Understanding the constructs around why some church leaders do not regard music as a professional vocation may yield data that can inform AA male musicians on how to address issues of the lack of value and respect for their careers.

Implications and recommendations for policy. Considering that much of the progression of a musician's career is relational, it is recommended that formal learning environments and entities that support musicians' careers allocate funds and investments in mandatory networking and mentoring experiences for musicians to connect and share with one another. As it was implied in the study that much of the success of a musician requires far more than just skill and ability, it is recommended that music programs, religious institutions, or community entities provide curriculum and instruction that focuses on the soft skills and interpersonal skills that are necessary to thrive in the music industry. It is also recommended that statewide arts-based organizations or city chambers of commerce establish an affiliate group of the American Federation of Musicians (n.d.) to receive technical assistance with establishing training for business skill development, marketing and advertising workshops, mentoring programs, or opportunities to connect local AA musicians with other regional or national musicians who have reached success in the music business.

Theme 3: Sociocultural Factors

Implications and recommendations for practice. Since the majority of the musicians in this study indicated that they spend a great amount of time in church playing at various services and since the literature points to the fact that there is a lack of systematic guidance towards the career advancement of AA male musicians who play for Black churches, churches should take responsibility for the career growth and development of musicians they employ. Churches should continue to invest sending musicians to conferences, workshops, learning experiences, and trainings outside of the local community to aid the AA male musicians' career development. Churches should also invest in formalized processes to hire and retain AA male musicians starting at the time of hire with a self-assessment that will assist the musician in assessing his career identity, musical giftedness, educational and spiritual needs, and resources that he does not have but desires to attain. It is also recommended that these entities offer practice and rehearsal spaces for musicians as a way to support the musician's survival and preparation in the industry.

Implications and recommendations for research. Since one of the major adversities that all the musicians in the study discuss was compensation, it is recommended that further research focus on factors that surround how much musicians are paid. Conducting a market research and salary study may be useful to assess and compare the salaries for AA male musicians who work in churches, particularly Black churches. Additionally, compensation research should focus on the comparisons of pay scales among various instrumentalists so that musicians who play various instruments can have salary ranges or pay scales that are congruent with the instruments that the musicians play. This research can result in a structured system that

will articulate the wages or salaries to be paid to musicians based on a fair and equitable system of pay rather than arbitrarily assigning pay to a musician based on favor or referral.

Research efforts that highlight the comparisons between AA male musicians in the local area and AA male musicians in other Southern geographical locations can assess whether or not the various adverse effects that the AA male musicians encounter is similar in other geographic locations. There is a need to explore the impact of musical influences, economic environments, and economic factors of AA male musicians who were born and raised in larger cities like Chicago, Detroit, and Memphis. Further exploration can assess whether the music culture of big cities has more or less influence on AA male musicians pursuing a career in music can shed light on hurdles of the career development and advancement process for AA male musicians who perform locally but desire to tour or travel to other locations. Additionally, further examination into the sociocultural factors and demographics of AA male musicians relative to their age, ethnicity, education, employment and earnings, or marital relationships should be compared to the same demographics of females and males with other ethnicities to determine whether results of this study are in fact unique to AA male musicians or could apply to other genders or ethnic groups. Based on this study's results about the changes in technology, further study should be conducted to indicate what technologies shape the career mobility of AA male musicians in the 21st century.

Implications and recommendations for policy. The disgruntled and varied responses to the amounts that musicians receive as compensation from the church and the local music culture imply that there ought to be a set of standards or entity that governs how pay should be determined and how much musicians should be compensated. It is recommended that the local regional musician community should establish a statewide musician's union under which AA

male musicians can operate to set standards, fees, and terms of service. Policy and standards set forth by this union would take into consideration the level of experience a musician has; the amount of time, work, and resources are required to complete the job; and work conditions and considerations that may impact the musician's investment in the music project and performance. It is also recommended that music departments at state and local institutions, city officials, thought leaders, music advocates, and arts-based organizations within states where AA male musicians thrive adopt the Fair Trade Music Campaign sponsored by the American Federation of Musicians (n.d.) to provide support for freelance musicians to negotiate fair contracts, create equitable business relationships, and establish enforceable contract standards.

In consideration of the differences in hiring practices and compensation among different musicians who are employed by churches, experiences shared by the musicians implied that churches are not held to particular standards in human resource practices. If this is the case, it is recommended that state organizations and departments (such as workforce services or human resource agencies) work in collaboration with church councils to ensure that churches adopt and use a set of human resource best practices that ensure fair and equal opportunity for musicians, outline how compensation and benefits are applied to musicians, and govern how grievances that may occur as a result of working in these environments will be addressed. These human resource practices can be presented at national conventions, gatherings, workshops, and conferences that church pastors and administrators attend in order to encourage consistency across religious institutions that employ AA male musicians.

Theme 4: Career Management Activities & Considerations

Implications and recommendations for practice. Although the musicians provided career self-management behaviors that coincide with career resilience and adaptability constructs, their responses to the question, “What areas or questions would you have that can help with developing and advancing your career?” imply that musicians are not knowledgeable about business, finances, and legal ramifications around conducting business as free agent professionals. It is recommended that musicians seek out qualified subject matter experts and receive consultation about best practices and considerations when making business, legal, or financial decisions as musicians. Furthermore, musicians repeatedly suggested that aspiring musicians continue to engage in activities that involve practicing and rehearsing. Considering experiences mentioned by musicians that implied a lack of rehearsal spaces and venues available to them, it is recommended that community organizations, city and state agencies, county governments or local banks that have community development block grants allocate funding to build or dedicate space to establish accessible training facilities and learning opportunities. These spaces ought to feature professional development opportunities, self-evaluative trainings and strategies, practice and rehearsal spaces for musicians, and mentorship experiences.

Implications and recommendations for research. Further research can examine and develop a set of standards to define levels of knowledge, musical skills, and abilities for AA male musicians. This will add to and support the career-decision-making behaviors for independent AA male musicians who do not have formal educational training or a music degree. Additionally, there is a need to investigate formal self-evaluation processes that will help career counselors to assess career decision making for independent AA male musicians.

Implications and recommendation for policy. The disregard and lack of value that the musicians discussed in the study implied that many people and entities that benefit from the musicians' craft do not regard their musicianship as a real profession and occupation. As a result, a musician's work is misunderstood and often not considered in compensation. It is recommended that the Department of Workforce Education and the U.S. Department of Labor provide more precise information on educational opportunities where one can learn about the career tasks, employment duties, self-management behaviors, and opportunities for education and training that do exist to support career development and advancement for musicians. Additionally, at the local and regional level, local community advocate organizations, art-based entities, state agencies, philanthropists, city government, and private agencies that have access to properties with vacant buildings in communities of color can establish a rededication program to repurpose unused and vacant properties as business incubators, performance and rehearsal spaces, and housing units for musicians while establishing stipulations for use of the space that requires musicians to invest time, effort, or service back to the community. These repurposed venues or spaces within these venues can be named after musicians in the community. A project of this nature can help to enhance the city's creative economy while providing musicians with the necessary support and recognition.

Summary

Footprints of Resilience: Tracking the Career Development Steps of African American Male Musicians is a research study that has implications for practice, research, and policy. Varying responses to the meaning of success implied that AA male musicians must determine the meaning of success and evaluate areas of personal character, spirituality, and individual attributes that are needed and may be missing to succeed in career development and

advancement. For independent AA male musicians, the local music scene is small and lacks a systematic governance that helps to establish a set of standards that churches and entities that hire musicians can follow to assure equality and fair compensation for AA male musicians. Since Black churches usually provide career entry opportunities for AA male musicians, the research implies that churches should have a responsibility in career growth and development for AA male musicians. Additionally, the musicians implied that music is often not considered a legitimate profession and occupation, which impacts how musicians are valued and compensated.

This research recommends the development of professional development and training curriculum to assist aspiring AA male musicians in assessing, developing, strengthening, and evaluating which self-management behaviors are necessary for career development and advancement. It is also recommended that local community advocate organizations, art-based entities, state agencies, or philanthropists should partner with banks, government agencies, or private businesses that have access to vacant properties in communities of color to establish accessible facilities that can house training and learning opportunities. These properties can be repurposed to include professional development; business, financial, and legal services; career counseling to facilitate self-evaluative training and strategies; practice and rehearsal spaces; mentorship experiences; and business incubation services.

This research also recommends establishing a musicians' union or working with the American Federation of Music (n.d.) to become an affiliate and adopt the Fair Trade Music Campaign to serve as a resource for musicians as well as a point of reference for entities that hire musicians to reduce grievances or confusion about compensation, appropriate work conditions, and performance expectations. As a way to educate people or entities who do not understand the

work of a musician or value musicianship as a profession, the Department of Workforce Education and the U.S. Department of Labor can provide more precise information and educational opportunities to inform communities about the job tasks, employment duties, self-management behaviors, and considerations to education and training that support career development and advancement for musicians. The O*Net OnLine summary report for musicians (National Center for O*NET Development, 2019) can serve as a point of reference for career coaches, support networks, life coaches, career counseling professionals and aspiring musicians to reference what the work of a musician entails and assess areas where musicians may need to improve to reach a level of success in their careers.

Based on the limitations of this study, further examination of the sociocultural, demographic, and geographic factors for AA male musicians as compared to the same factors for musicians from other ethnicities would help to determine if the findings of this study are unique to AA male musicians or applicable to other musicians with different backgrounds. Workforce education programs, higher education institutions, and arts advocate organizations can benefit from conducting further studies to identify instruction, curriculum, formal programs, supportive resources, and trainings for AA male musicians. These trainings can address soft skills and personal development, self-evaluation processes, mentorship, and comparative compensation analyses to provide ongoing support and progressive practice within human resource and workforce development designed to support the career development and advancement of AA male musicians.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Document Analysis Form

Archival #:	Date of Analysis:
Participant Identifier:	# of Submitted Documents:

- (1) Label each document submitted with a Roman numeral at the top of each page. For documents with multiple pages, label each page with the Roman numeral followed associated page number. List all the documents below by recording the label, type of document, and date submitted.
- (2) What are some career activities that stand out outside the realm of a music profession?
- (3) Identify any indications that there were major career transitions or gaps of employment.
- (4) Does the document(s) list any opportunities the musician may have taken to enhance his skills?
- (5) Were there any indication of specific education or training that was pertinent to the development of a professional career as a musician?
- (6) Record additional observations that are noteworthy. Compose follow up questions on next page.

Archival #:	Participant Identifier:	Date:	Page ____
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Follow Up Questions for In-Depth Interview

[illegible]

APPENDIX B – Resume Replacement Form

Archival #:

Site:

Date:

Start Time:

Participant Identifier:

End Time:

Name any notable awards and accomplishments received throughout your career.

Provide dates of performances with nationally acclaimed artists.

List any important skills that you believe would be important for employers to know.

Provide dates of attendance, diplomas, degrees, or certifications of your educational history.

List any organizations or volunteer experiences that you been engaged in for the past 10 years.

Provide employment history from the last 10 years.

APPENDIX C – In-Depth Interview Protocol

1. How long have you performed music? What instrument(s) do you know how to play?
2. How long have you performed for your church? How often do you perform for your church?
3. Have you performed at any other churches in the area?
4. Describe how you began your career as a musician.
 - a. What compelled you to become professionals in this field?
 - b. What were the influences?
 - c. Was it a conscious decision or did it “just happen” as career experiences presented themselves?
5. What is it like to be a professional musician?
 - a. How do you think your experience is similar and different from other male musicians?
 - b. What genres of music have you performed?
 - c. Do you believe your experience as an African American male musician is different from other musicians who are female or of a different cultural or ethnic background?
 - d. Do you believe your experience as an independent musician is different from those musicians who are signed to a record label? If so, how is it different?
6. What is "success" in your career?
 - a. What has helped to shape that idea or definition of success?
 - b. What compromises or sacrifices are involved in this idea of success?
 - c. What would be the ultimate, perfect job or career path for you?
 - d. What are some career experiences that would be considered unsuccessful for you?
7. What behaviors, thoughts, or beliefs brought about success?
 - a. What skills are important?
 - b. What are some of the unique characteristics that you recognize about yourself that have impacted your career development?
 - c. What are some external sources that impacted career advancement?
 - d. What is vital to a support system for you?
 - i. Is your family supportive of the decision to pursue a career in music?
 - e. How did you establish these support systems?
 - i. Were they automatically inherited?
 - ii. Were they systems you have had to create?
8. As you take necessary steps to advance in your career, what are some of the experiences related to your cultural or social background that have helped or hindered your career development?
 - a. Any experiences influenced by race? By gender? By internal, individual factors?

- b. How has your immediate environment (where you work, where you live, who you interact with) helped or hindered your career?
- 9. How has the economic climate or labor market affected your career development and advancement as a musician?
 - a. Explain any barriers you have experienced with finding work. What do you think attributed to those barriers?
 - b. Have you had to consider working in jobs that were not music performance jobs? Why? How did those experiences help or hurt career development or advancement?
 - c. How do you survive in the music industry?
- 10. What are some of the most significant challenges that you have faced during the career development process and why?
 - a. How do you persist through these challenges?
 - b. How do you recover after the challenges?
 - c. How have you prepared to adapt in case challenges surface?
 - d. Were there any external resources or support that helped you overcome these challenges?
- 11. How has working within a religious institution affected your career development and advancement?
 - a. How does this environment offer benefit to your career development?
 - b. How does this environment present struggles to the pursuit of career advancement?
- 12. What resources are available for you to find opportunities to develop and advance your career?
 - a. What resources have been most significant to help you navigate career advancement as an independent musician? How did you attain these resources?
 - b. What networks are important to tap into? How does a musician access these networks?
 - c. What training or professional development was available to you for career development and advancement? How did you learn about these sources?
- 13. What advice would you give to striving African American male musicians?

APPENDIX D – Researcher Observation Form

Researcher Observation Form

Archival #:	Data Collection Activity:
Participant Identifier:	Start Time:
Date:	End Time:

(1) Describe the setting below.

Research Observation Form Cont'd

Archival #:	Participant Identifier:	Date:	Page __
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(2) Notes on Observations

APPENDIX E – Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Document

Project Title:

Footprints of Resilience: Tracking the Career Development Steps of African American Male Musicians

Investigator:

Patrice Bax, M.Ed.
Director of Programs
Brandon House Cultural & Performing Arts Center
P.O. Box 466
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203
708-732-2922
pbax@uark.edu

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore variables of career resilience and adaptability that influence career development and advancement for independent African American male musicians who work in a free agency workforce. You are being asked to participate as a professional musician to talk about your experience in the industry and influential factors that impact career development.

Procedures:

You are invited to participate in one interview of approximately 45-60 minutes in length at a location that is convenient for you, as well as an observation session of approximately 30 minutes in length during a time in which you are engaging in your music profession. Interview topics will target your experience as an African American male musician and your thoughts about any factors, strategies, or circumstances that have helped or hindered your career development in this field. Participating in this study also requires a submission of your resume, short biography, and personal notes taken during the observation sessions for document analysis. Your interview and observation will be audio recorded with your permission and transcribed for the purpose of accuracy. You will receive a copy of the transcript so that you may verify that your words have been captured correctly. The interviewer will also take written notes during the interview.

Risks of Participation:

There are no known risks associated with this study that are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits:

No direct benefits are associated with this research. However, the results may have implications for training elements to assist aspiring African American musicians in their career development process.

Confidentiality:

Names of the participants, employment agencies, educational institutions, and the titles of any music work mentioned during document analysis, interview, and observations will be changed to protect participant identity and maintain confidentiality. All audio recordings and transcripts obtained from participants will be kept confidential to the fullest extent of the law and University policy. The audio recordings and interview notes will be stored on the interviewer's hard drive, which will be password protected, for three years after the study concludes. Upon completion of the study, physical copies of audio recordings, interview and observation documentations, and document analysis data will be kept in a large, heavy-duty archival envelop with an archival information sheet attached and stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home. All physical copies of documentation and virtual copies will be kept by researcher for 3 years, upon which time it will be destroyed and deleted.

The University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board has the authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures.

Compensation:

No compensation will be offered for participation in this project.

Contacts:

For questions about this research, you may contact the following persons:

For questions about this study, contact Patrice Bax, Director of Programs, Brandon House Cultural & Performing Arts Center, P.O. Box 466, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203, Tel. 708-732-2922, Email pbax@uark.edu.

For concerns about this study, contact Dr. Carsten Schmidtke, Asst. Professor of Workforce Development Education, Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources, and Communication Disorders, College of Education and Health Professions, 101 Graduate Education Building, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, Tel. 479-575-4047, Email cswded@uark.edu.

Participant Rights:

As a participant in this research, you are entitled to know the nature of my research. You are free to decline to participate, and you are free to stop the questionnaire or withdraw from the project at any time. No penalty or risks are associated with withdrawing your participation. Feel free to ask any questions, at any time about the nature of the research activity and the methods I am using.

Signatures:

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX F – Example Recruitment Email

To: Potential Participant

Subject: Seeking African American Male Musicians to Participate in Qualitative Study

My name is Patrice Bax, I serve as the Director of Programs at Brandon House Cultural & Performing Arts Center located in Little Rock, Arkansas. At this time, I am pursuing my Doctoral Degree in Human Resources and Workforce Development Education at the University of Arkansas, and I am conducting a study entitled *Footprints of Resilience: Tracking the Career Development Steps of African American Male Musicians*. The purpose of this study is to explore variables of career resilience and adaptability that influence career development and advancement for independent African American male musicians who work in a free agency workforce. The criteria to participate in the study is below:

- You must be an African American male;
- show proof of experience in playing for nationally acclaimed artist/performer in the music business;
- demonstrate the ability to book performance opportunities at least three times months;
- and generate at least 50% of net income by way of musical ability.

If you meet the criteria, you are being asked to participate as a professional musician to talk about your experience in the industry and influential factors that impact career development. If you choose to participate in this project you will engage in one interview of approximately 45-60 minutes in length at a location that is convenient for you, as well as an observation session of approximately 30 minutes in length during a time in which you are engaging in your music profession. Participating in this study also requires a submission of your resume, short biography, and personal notes taken during the observation sessions for document analysis.

There are no known risks associated with this study. I will not collect any personally identifiable information during the study. Names of the participants, employment agencies, educational institutions, and the titles of any music work mentioned during document analysis, interview, and observations will be changed to protect participant identity and maintain confidentiality. If you interested in participating in this study, please feel free to respond to this email with a date and time to discuss the Informed Consent Form and submit your resume and personal biography.

For questions about this study, contact Patrice Bax, Director of Programs, Brandon House Cultural & Performing Arts Center, P.O. Box 466, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203, Tel. 708-732-2922, Email pbax@uark.edu. For concerns about this study, contact Dr. Carsten Schmidtke, Asst. Professor of Workforce Development Education, Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources, and Communication Disorders, College of Education and Health Professions, 101 Graduate Education Building, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, Tel. 479-575-4047, Email cswded@uark.edu.

APPENDIX G – Archival Information Sheet

Archival Information Sheet

Study: _____ Archival #:

Data Type: (circle one)	Document Analysis	Individual Interview	Participant Observation
Site:			
Participant Identifier:		Participant Age:	

	Data in this envelope:	Research Roles:	Name	Date
	Recorded Interview on CD	Data Collector		
	Interview Guide Notes	Transcriber		
	Signed Informed Consent Form	Typist		
	Participant Documentation			
	Field Notes Form			
	Transcribed Field Notes			
	Transcripts			
	Participant Observation Form			

APPENDIX H – Analytical Memo

Analytical Form

Archival #:

Participant Identifier:

Date:

Data Collection Activity:

Start Time:

End Time:

Interpretation Notes

CODING NOTES

Analytical Form Cont'd

Archival #:	Participant Identifier:	Date:	Page ____
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Interpretation Notes

CODING NOTES

APPENDIX I - Follow Up Questions for In-Depth Interview

Archival #: _____ Participant Identifier: _____ Date: _____ Page ____

Question (# or key words)	Responses	Observations/Notes

APPENDIX J – Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

July 18, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: Patrice Bax
Carsten Schmidtke

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 17-06-770

Protocol Title: *Footprints of Resilience: Tracking the Career Development Steps of African American Male Musicians*

Review Type: ☐ EXEMPT ☒ EXPEDITED ☐ FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 07/13/2017 Expiration Date: 07/12/2018

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 30 participants. If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.